

ead
It's a nice oblation
for living muslims

LONDON (R) — The Daily Express reported on Wednesday that the British government is considering a new policy of "targeted killing" of terrorists.

Ed-in-soup at Korean banquet
The Daily Express reported on Wednesday that the British government is considering a new policy of "targeted killing" of terrorists.

Daredevil escape prison time
The Daily Express reported on Wednesday that the British government is considering a new policy of "targeted killing" of terrorists.

meet
The Daily Express reported on Wednesday that the British government is considering a new policy of "targeted killing" of terrorists.

Oregon moves against call of nature on the net
The Daily Express reported on Wednesday that the British government is considering a new policy of "targeted killing" of terrorists.

Church leader preaches joy of paying taxes
The Daily Express reported on Wednesday that the British government is considering a new policy of "targeted killing" of terrorists.

King discusses Syria visit with Saudi crown prince

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Friday held talks with Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz via telephone on the outcome of his visit to Syria. Jordan Television reported. King Abdullah and Prince Abdullah also reviewed bilateral relations and regional and international issues of concern. Earlier, the King spoke with UAE President Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak by phone and briefed them on his successful visit to Syria.

Jordan Times

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King hails talks with Assad as 'turning point' in Jordan-Syria ties

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Abdullah concluded a two-day visit to Syria on Thursday by hailing his trip and talks with President Hafez Assad as "a turning point in bilateral relations on all fronts to be strengthened in a manner that will safeguard the interests of the Jordanian and Syrian people and the Arab Nation at large."

"This visit was extremely successful and marks a turning point in our relations, as we see eye to eye on all issues," King Abdullah upon his return to Amman.

"We agree that we have a common future in the Arab Nation," the King said, adding the visit "removed any lingering barriers and laid down the foundation for a fruitful future of bilateral cooperation."

Expressing full satisfaction with the outcome of the visit, the King said the results of the talks with Assad will be revealed in the coming few days.

King Abdullah said the Jordanian delegation felt that Assad and the Syrian leadership are keen on opening all doors for coordination between the two countries, adding that Damascus and

Amman are in agreement on the need to promote bilateral ties in all fields.

Expressing his appreciation of the Syrian leadership's welcome and hospitality accorded to the Jordanian delegation, King Abdullah said Assad is enthusiastic about bolstering relations. He also noted that he has established very strong ties with Assad's son, Bashar, whom the King said has displayed a deep interest in strengthening bilateral relations.

The president's son accompanied King Abdullah on a tour of Damascus' quarters.

In remarks to the press, King Abdullah said President Assad has directed the Syrian government to immediately consider outstanding issues of concern to the two countries through a series of meetings of officials from both sides.

Delegation sources said the Joint Jordanian-Syrian Higher Committee, which has not convened for years, is scheduled to hold a meeting in the first week of June.

King Abdullah expressed hope that the stalled peace process will be revived following the Israeli elections next month and emphasised

that Jordan calls for the full implementation of the signed accords. The King also reiterated Jordan's support for the Palestinian people's rights.

King Abdullah said Jordan supports Syria's efforts to regain its rights and backs Damascus' calls for the resumption of the peace talks from the point they reached under Israel's previous Labour government.

The Syrian press hailed the Monarch's visit as "a turning point in Syrian-Jordanian relations."

Al Thawra daily said "the visit will lead to positive results in terms of cooperation and a lifting of the obstacles which darkened relations. Syria opens its arms to our Jordanian brothers and will spare no effort to consolidate relations between our two fraternal countries."

The Tishrin daily said: "Solidarity and cooperation are a common interest, and positive results of the visit will block the road to those counting on dividing the Arabs."

Upon his departure from Damascus, King Abdullah sent a cable to Assad expressing his gratitude and appreciation of the hospitality accord-

ed to him and the Jordanian delegation and his satisfaction with the talks which, he said, were conducted in a constructive atmosphere. The King also said Jordan is determined to join Assad in efforts to safeguard pan-Arab interests in general and those of Jordan and Syria in particular.

King Abdullah told the press that talks with Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi during his recent visit to Libya were extremely successful and yielded positive results serving the interests of the Jordanian and Libyan peoples.

With regard to Iraq, the King reiterated Jordan's support for an end to the Iraqi people's sufferings caused by the U.N. sanctions. He reaffirmed Jordan's interest in safeguarding Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Meanwhile, French business circles in Paris on Thursday said King Abdullah will meet the heads of major French companies during a state visit to Paris in November.

It will be his second visit to France this year. The King will be in France in June on a working visit, according to informed French sources.



Firefighters and army engineering squads on Friday attempt to clear the debris of the ruined offices of Serbian state television and search for any survivors under the wreckage in downtown Belgrade. The offices of the station were hit by NATO missiles earlier on Friday. A green sheet, right, covers the body of a dead employee of the television station (AP photo)

NATO hits Serb TV, 10 killed

Alliance rejects Milosevic offer; oil embargo imposed

Agencies

NATO PLANES attacked targets in Kosovo on Friday after alliance strikes killed at least 10 people in reducing a Serbian state television building to rubble in a pre-dawn attack.

The state television station RTS resumed broadcasting six hours after the attack.

Meanwhile, NATO leaders meeting in Washington added an oil embargo to their campaign against Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic on Friday.

The 19-nation alliance, opening a summit to mark its 50th anniversary, declared it would impose an embargo on petroleum products in a move that analysts said could provoke a showdown with Russia (see separate story).

The Yugoslav news agency Tanjug, reporting from the provincial capital Pristina, said NATO planes fired at least 15 missiles in areas

northeast and south of Pristina in the late afternoon.

It said NATO planes fired two missiles in the area of Ajvalija village, south of Pristina, and three missiles on the Grmija picnic grounds, northeast of the city.

Tanjug also said blasts were heard near the suburbs of Pomazur and Belacevac, around the Slatina civilian airport, and around Gole in the Lipjan area, southwest of Pristina. It gave no further details.

In central Belgrade, rescue workers searched for survivors in the remains of the four-storey television building.

Television film taken inside the building shortly after the blast showed grisly scenes of mangled bodies trapped in the ruins and badly injured people being pulled out.

Smoke was still rising from the rubble on Friday afternoon. The television's transmitter

appeared largely undamaged but all the windows on an adjacent building — a children's cultural centre — were blown out.

Minister without portfolio Goran Matic said 10 people were killed and at least 20 were feared buried in the rubble.

"This is a monstrous crime without precedent in history," Matic said on Politika television, another pro-government station briefly taken off the air by the blast.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) Friday condemned NATO's bombing of Serb TV headquarters.

"NATO's decision to target civilian broadcast facilities not only increases the danger for reporters now working in Yugoslavia," wrote CPJ Executive Director Ann Cooper in a letter to NATO Secretary General Javier Solana.

(Continued on page 2)

Yarmouk River at lowest recent level — official

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — The government on Friday said the Yarmouk River has reached its lowest level in recent history, a development that may worsen the state of drought in Jordan this summer.

Jordan Valley Authority Secretary General Duraid Mahasneh told the Jordan Times that measurements made on Tuesday to examine the river's water level revealed the severe reduction. He gave no figures.

The river, which provides Jordan with 135 million cubic metres (mcm) of water per year, begins in Syria, flows along the Syrian-Jordanian border and then joins the Jordan River downstream from Lake Tiberias.

The drought, which has reportedly cost the Kingdom JD150 million so far, was officially declared in January as rainfall, which accounts for about 60 per cent of the country's water supply, dipped to just two per cent of the seasonal average. The deficit in domestic use by the end of 1999 is projected to reach approximately 10 per cent, with demand totalling 283mcm and supply amounting to 254mcm, according to the government.

The government earlier this month devised an emergency plan to deal with the crisis, presenting three shortage scenarios of increasing severity, all of which focus on whether the Zai plant will be able to perform at full capacity and on the Amman and Balqa governorates, where the water shortage is expected to be most severe.

Mahasneh, who heads the Jordanian side in a joint water committee with Israel, declined on Friday to comment on recent officials' statements that the Jewish state has agreed to provide the Kingdom with the full 55mcm of water as stipulated in the 1994 peace treaty. The two sides last week reached a breakthrough in their water dispute, which began last month when Israel proposed cutting supplies to the Kingdom by 40 per cent because of a regional drought.

(Continued on page 2)

Netanyahu accused of igniting tension in Jerusalem over decision to close PLO offices

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's decision to shut several offices in Orient House, the unofficial Palestinian headquarters in occupied Jerusalem, was denounced as a pre-election ploy Friday which risked raising tensions.

President Ezer Weizman joined Palestinians, Israeli left-wing politicians and commentators in condemning the potentially explosive move just four weeks before Israelis go to the polls to choose a new parliament and prime minister. "Regarding Orient House, I don't think we should blow up such a sensitive issue as Jerusalem," said Weizman, a frequent critic of Netanyahu's hardline stance towards the Palestinians.

"Before knowing what government we will have after the elections to pursue the peace process with the Palestinians, we have to calm down a bit," he said.

Israel boosted the police presence in occupied east Jerusalem on Friday amid fears the decision to close several PLO offices at Orient House could trigger Palestinian violence.

Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani said "three

or four" offices in Orient House would be closed once the necessary legal steps were taken.

He said the Israeli police had gathered enough evidence to prove before an Israeli court that the offices threatened with closure were operating on behalf of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

He said that because of the legal moves, the actual orders to close the offices may not come for "several days."

Kahalani did not rule out resorting to force if necessary to close the offices, but nevertheless tried to play down possible Palestinian unrest.

"We are ready to deal with rioting, but I don't think there will be any immediate clashes," he said.

Netanyahu ordered the closure after a meeting Wednesday at Orient House between Palestinian officials and Arab diplomats that he claimed violated agreements barring PNA activity in Jerusalem.

"We are not ready to have Orient House, situated in the capital of the state of Israel, serve as the Palestinian foreign ministry," he said Thursday.

Netanyahu, who is lagging in opinion polls behind his main rival for the premiership,

Labour Party chief Ehud Barak, has tried to make an alleged Palestinian threat to Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem a central theme of his reelection campaign.

Opposition Labour MP Shimon Ben Ami denounced Netanyahu's move on Orient House as "nationalistic machismo" and accused him of using the Jerusalem issue as an "election propaganda weapon."

Hatem Abdul Khader, who represents Arab east Jerusalem in the Palestinian legislative assembly, said Netanyahu was playing with fire.

"We will do everything to ensure the failure of Netanyahu's attempts to provoke confrontations before the elections."

In September 1996, Netanyahu's decision to open a new entrance to an archaeological tunnel outside the Al Aqsa Mosque complex in Jerusalem triggered three days of clashes in which more than 80 people died.

Visiting Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov also expressed reservations about Israel's decision.

"All issues affecting Jerusalem are sensitive, which is why they must be resolved

through negotiation," he said after talks with Netanyahu.

Nevertheless, the political commentator for Israel's second television channel, Emmanuel Rosen, remarked that Netanyahu had seized the initiative from Labour for the first time in the campaign for the May 17 elections.

"The prime minister is much more at ease with an issue such as Jerusalem, on which he has wide support among voters, than on a military withdrawal from Lebanon," he said.

Kahalani, however, denied the election campaign had influenced Netanyahu's decision.

Under the 1993 Oslo peace accords, the PNA is authorised to operate only in agreed parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The political status of Arab east Jerusalem, which Israel occupied in 1967 and later illegally annexed as part of its capital, was to be resolved in future negotiations.

Israel insists that east Jerusalem is part of its "undivided eternal capital" — a declaration not recognised by the international community, while the Palestinians hope to make the sector the capital of a state of their own.

NATO leaders meet at 50th anniversary summit, vow to defeat Milosevic



Heads of state are introduced during the official opening of NATO's 50th anniversary summit on Friday (AP photo)

WASHINGTON (R) — NATO leaders declared their unity and determination to prevail over Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic on Friday, rejecting his latest peace bid and vowing to step up bombing and economic pressure.

The 19 leaders opened their 50th anniversary summit with a special session on Kosovo, one month into their air war against Yugoslavia, declaring: "NATO is determined to prevail."

In a statement they vowed to step up relentless military and economic pressure on Milosevic until he accepted a total withdrawal from the Serbian province and allowed all ethnic Albanian refugees to return to their homes under the protection of an international security force with NATO as its core.

The leaders made no mention of sending in ground troops, even though 30 days of air strikes have

not broken Milosevic's resolve or stemmed a destabilising flood of refugees from Kosovo into fragile neighbouring states.

While British Defence Secretary George Robertson said ground forces would be "fundamental to the endgame in Kosovo," German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said the option of waging a land campaign was "off the table."

After NATO bombs struck Serbian television headquarters overnight, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe General Wesley Clark gave the summit an upbeat briefing on the air campaign, saying: "We are winning. He is losing, and he knows it."

He said Milosevic was prepared to accept a high level of damage but Serbian forces were vulnerable to collapse.

Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini struck a discordant note, according to his spokesman, con-

demning the strike on the TV station and saying it was "not in the plans."

U.S. President Bill Clinton underlined the moral crusade which NATO believes it is waging in the Balkans, declaring: "We are in Kosovo because we want to replace ethnic cleansing with tolerance and decency; violence with security; disintegration with restoration; isolation with integration into the rest of the region and the continent."

British Prime Minister Tony Blair proclaimed: "Reversing the hideous policy of ethnic cleansing is the best anniversary memorial NATO could have." And French President Jacques Chirac said it would be a long but just war.

As the leaders met in security-cordoned central Washington, conflicting reports emerged of what exactly Milosevic had accepted in talks with former Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin on

Thursday. Moscow said he had agreed to a U.N.-led military force with foreign troops from countries not engaged in the air strikes.

But the Yugoslav foreign ministry said Belgrade would countenance only unarmed U.N. observers.

The NATO leaders pledged to work constructively with Russia to seek an acceptable solution but said Milosevic's "offers to date do not meet this test."

U.S. National Security Adviser Sandy Berger said there were no plans for Chernomyrdin to come to the summit to brief NATO.

Russia has boycotted the event in protest at the bombing.

The allies endorsed a European Union oil embargo on Yugoslavia and ordered their defence ministers to find ways of stopping the delivery of war material by naval action.

(Continued on page 2)

Angry students protest in Beirut against Israeli invasion of Arnoun

BEIRUT (AFP) — More than a thousand students protested here on Friday against Israel's occupation of the southern Lebanese village of Arnoun, burning U.S. and Israeli flags and calling on Israel to withdraw from Lebanon.

About 1,200 university and school students gathered in downtown Beirut, bearing Lebanese flags and banners denouncing Arnoun's occupation.

"A civilian resistance against the barbaric occupation," read one sign. "We shall return to you, Arnoun," said one banner while another

called on the "young people of Lebanon to unite for the liberation of the south."

A group of students burned Israeli and U.S. flags while others cheered.

Israeli troops moved into Arnoun in February, but large crowds of Lebanese, mostly students from Beirut, ripped down the barriers during protest demonstrations.

But on April 15, Israeli soldiers and members of their allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia again occupied the village, located on the northern edge of the Israeli-occupied border zone

of southern Lebanon. Israeli troops opened fire on a group of journalists at Arnoun's entrance the next day, wounding one television cameraman.

On Monday, the committee monitoring the 1996 truce in southern Lebanon — made up of delegates from Israel, France, Lebanon, Syria and the United States — called for "concrete steps" to restore the status quo in Arnoun.

A Lebanese government official said the panel entrusted the U.S. and France to establish bilateral contacts with each of

Lebanon and Israel to help return to the situation in Arnoun prior to April 15.

On Thursday, some 40 Lebanese students headed off from Beirut for Arnoun on to "liberate" Arnoun again, but they were barred from reaching the village by Lebanese army soldiers who feared for their safety.

Uri Lubrani, coordinator of Israeli activities in Lebanon, has warned against using civilians to fight Israel's occupation of Arnoun, saying Beirut would be responsible for any harm that came to them.

Yarmouk River at lowest recent level — official

(Continued from page 1)

Of the 55mcm, all of which come from Lake Tiberias, 30mcm were stipulated in the peace treaty while the rest is provided for in a 1997 agreement.

Commenting on water talks with Syria during His Majesty King Abdullah's visit, Mahasneh said the government is expected to announce new developments this week. He gave no further details.

Local newspapers quoted Minister of Water and Irrigation Kamel Mahadin as saying that the two sides will review the long-delayed Wihdeh Dam on the Yarmouk and that a Jordanian technical team will leave for Damascus next week to discuss related issues.

A joint committee agreed last year to move ahead with the construction of the JD152 million dam and seek funding for the project. The dam is expected to have a storage capacity of 225mcm of water. Construction is expected to take three-and-a-half years.

Iraq urges U.N. to act to stop Turkish incursions

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq called on the United Nations on Friday to seek an immediate withdrawal of Turkish troops from the north of the country and to halt the incursions.

"The U.N. is urged to assume its responsibility... and intervene to halt the threats and aggressions against Iraq," Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Sahhaf said in a message to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, the official INA news agency reported.

He said Annan should tell the Turkish govern-

ment to "confirm to the principles of the U.N. Charter and withdraw its troops immediately from northern Iraq."

Sahhaf made a similar request to the Arab League on Tuesday, saying that the Turkish incursion had caused "large human and material losses" in the Kurdish north, which has remained outside Baghdad's control since the 1991 Gulf War.

The Turkish army launched a fresh campaign against the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) in

the north of Iraq earlier this month.

It regularly crosses the border to hunt down PKK units in northern Iraq, used for rear bases by the rebels since Baghdad's authority over the region collapsed.

Some 20,000 troops are on the move in the operation, according to Turkish press reports.

The PKK has been waging an armed rebellion in southeastern Turkey since 1984. More than 31,000 people have been killed in the conflict.



ISRAEL STEPS UP SECURITY: An Israeli border guard looks on as Muslim worshippers leave Al Aqsa Mosque compound after Friday prayers in Israeli-occupied Arab east Jerusalem. Israeli forces deployed reinforcements after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided to shut down parts of the Orient House, the Palestinian headquarters in east Jerusalem. Despite the tension, Friday prayers went on peacefully (AFP photo)

'Ocalan suffers from heart problems'

ANKARA (AP) — Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan complained of a weak heart and increased palpitations, one of his lawyers told the Anadolu news agency Thursday.

"He said he feels increasing palpitations and that his heart is weaker," Firat Karar said after visiting Ocalan on his prison island.

Ocalan, 39, is the sole inmate of Imrali island, where he is awaiting trial on charges of treason. He faces the death penalty, if convicted.

Kurdish activists have repeatedly expressed concern about his health condition. Until Thursday, lawyers said the rebel appeared healthy.

Ocalan himself complained of health problems when he landed in Rome last November at the beginning of his five-month search for a new base that ended with his capture by Turkish forces in Kenya on Feb. 15.

Turkish authorities say Ocalan is submitted to daily medical check-ups by two doctors.

A state security court in Ankara will hold a hearing April 30 and is expected to merge almost half a dozen cases pending against Ocalan. A trial date will be set after the hearing.

Ocalan's rebels have been fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey since 1984, in a conflict that has killed some 37,000 people.

NATO hits Serb TV, 10 killed

(Continued from page 1)

It also "permanently jeopardises all journalists as non-combatants in international conflicts as provided for in the Geneva Conventions," she wrote.

Cooper noted the bombing directly contradicted NATO assurances offered just days earlier in a letter to the International Federation of Journalists.

Amnesty International said Friday it was seeking an "urgent explanation" from NATO over its attack on the Serbian television headquarters.

"Based on the information available, we do not see how this attack could be justified. We are seeking an urgent explanation from NATO as to their reasons for carrying out this attack," said a spokesman for the human rights organisation.

"For a site to be considered a legitimate military target, there must be a direct link with the conduct of military operations, and even then the safeguards for protecting civilians must be respected," he added.

In Athens, Yugoslavia's ambassador to Greece, Dragomir Vucicevic, told a news conference a total of 25 people were killed when NATO struck the RTS television building.

Witnesses said that what they thought was a laser-guided bomb hit the main control room of the television centre while at least 70 people were at work in the building.

Also Friday, the alliance reacted coolly to remarks in Moscow by Russia's Balkan envoy Viktor Chernomyrdin, who said that during talks in Belgrade this

week Milosevic had agreed to the deployment of foreign troops in Kosovo.

Belgrade, apparently contradicting his comments. Later said it had discussed only a possible unarmed U.N. presence in the province.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin has said Moscow does not intend to be drawn into the conflict, but analysts said a NATO ban on the delivery of oil products to Yugoslavia could bring relations between Russia and the Western alliance to the brink.

"Russia has to decide if it wants Milosevic to carry on fighting. That's the \$64,000 question," an oil analyst in London said. "NATO would be extremely foolish to enforce a ban as it would lead to direct confrontation with Russian civilian vessels."

Russia was the only country to vote against a U.N. resolution on Friday condemning "horrendous and ongoing war crimes" against ethnic Albanians by Serb forces in Kosovo.

The 53-state U.N. human rights body, holding its annual session in Geneva, overwhelmingly adopted the resolution by a vote of 46 countries in favour. Six countries abstained.

The U.N. estimated 600,000 ethnic Albanians have fled Kosovo over the last year, causing a major refugee crisis in neighbouring countries.

Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon said NATO strikes which knocked out power supplies to some parts of Belgrade on Friday represented a change in strategy aimed at bringing the war home to the broad population of Yugoslavia.

"I think the broad message is that they [Serbs] should put pressure on their leadership to end this," he said.

The attacks also hit transmitters elsewhere in Belgrade in one of NATO's fiercest strikes so far on the city.

NATO has hit Yugoslav targets from the air for the past month to try to force Milosevic to withdraw his forces from.

Tanjug said NATO planes had attacked targets around Serbia's second city, Novi Sad. Explosions were heard from nearby mount Fruska Gora, site of a television transmitter, at around 2:00 a.m. Tanjug also reported a big blast near the southeastern city of Nis at about 2:20 a.m. and said a railway bridge had been hit at Ostruznica, 25-kilometre southwest of Belgrade.

NATO leaders meet at 50th anniversary summit, vow to defeat Milosevic

(Continued from page 1)

Berger said NATO did not rule out using force to stop oil shipments, although diplomats said France prevented any mention of that in the joint statement on legal grounds.

The Balkan conflict transformed what was to have been a jubilation celebration of NATO's 50th anniversary into a council of war on how best to dislodge Serb forces from Kosovo.

But there was still some martial pomp. Military fanfares greeted the leaders in a flag-bedecked Mellon Auditorium where they signed a Washington Declaration and delivered 19 ringing speeches in the room where NATO was founded in 1949 in the depths of the Cold War.

Limo-lock had already begun outside the meeting site, where motorcades were three-deep by mid-morning. Otherwise, Washington's heart was largely deserted, with 90,000 federal workers

given the day off to cut down on congestion.

"As we meet in Washington today, Europe is confronting a very serious crisis," NATO Secretary General Javier Solana said in opening remarks. "Images of hundreds of thousands of deported people, burned homes and destroyed villages recall images we had hoped never to see again."

NATO said it was prepared to suspend its air strikes once Belgrade unequivocally accepted the West's peace conditions and began withdrawing its forces from Kosovo.

NATO spokesman Jamie Shea said Milosevic's plan seemed to "fall well short" of NATO's demands but would be encouraging if it showed Milosevic was struggling to find a way out.

"The next time he gets in touch it has to be a much more substantial offer," he said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Cartoon — The World of Peter Rabbit and Friends
18:30 Mirror, Mirror
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 French Programme
19:30 News headlines
19:33 French Programmes
20:00 Today's Health
20:30 The Pretender
21:15 Ancient Civilizations
22:00 News in English
22:20 Feature film — Keeping the Promise

PRAYER TIMES

03:30 Fajr
04:53 Sunrise
11:34 Dhuhr
15:12 Asr
18:15 Maghreb
19:38 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweidieh Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366
Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811
St. Alfreys Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751
Amman International Church Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweidieh Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church Tel. 4634757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331
The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 10/27
Aqaba 13/31
Deserts 08/29
Jordan Valley 18/31

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 25 Aqaba 28. Humidity readings: Amman 20 per cent. Aqaba 40 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun 08/24
Jerash 11/28
Um Qays 12/28
Madaba 10/26
Petra 10/27
Dead Sea 22/32

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

It will be warm with temperatures rising gradually becoming 2-3 degrees centigrade above average. Clouds will appear at different altitudes and winds easterly to southeasterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, it will be occasionally dusty, warm, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Useful Telephone Numbers
NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Bahjat Bader 5332642
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 5350432
Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi 4893542
Dr. Khalil Al-Talib 4757253

AMMAN:
Firas Pharmacy 5661912
Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730
Mayadah Pharmacy 5557004

Ruka Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh (02)250080
Fou'ad Pharmacy (02)275360

ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Nabhan (05)3851743
Palestine Pharmacy (05)983562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade 4617101
Blood Bank 4775121
Highway Police 5343402
Traffic Police 4896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints 5605800
Price Complaints 5661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints 4897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 7871111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 0132
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101
Jordan Television 4773111
Radio Jordan 4774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co. 4636381

RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199
The Islamic, Abdul 5666131/7
Hussein Medical Centre 5856856
Luzmila 4630195
Khalid Maternity 4642411/6
Akhlel Maternity 4642411/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071
Shmeisani Hospital 5607431
Jordan Hospital 5607550
University Hospital 5353444
Al-Muasher Hospital 5667279
Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4771013
Al-Bashir 4775111/26
Army, Marka 4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 5157100
Amal Hospital 5607155
Al Amal Cancer Centre 5353000
Jerusalem Hospital 4387181

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Roman Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)7101372, (02)7103101
Rosary Sisters Hospital (02)7102831, (02)7102011
Specialty Hospital (02)7103100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)2014111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (44) 52700 or (44) 523250. Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:30 Damascus (RJ)

09:25 Beirut (RJ)
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)
09:45 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:30 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:35 Colombo (RJ)
14:30 Cairo (RJ)
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:25 London (RJ)
18:25 Lyon (add) (RJ)
19:30 Paris (add) (RJ)
19:35 Rome (RJ)
20:55 Frankfurt (RJ)
00:45 Paris (add) (RJ)
06:15 Bangkok, Doha (RJ)

Other Flights
11:15 Sanaa (YJ)
12:30 Riyadh (SV)
13:10 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
13:10 Milan (AZ)
14:00 Vienna (OS)
14:40 Istanbul (TK)
15:35 Beirut (ME)
18:00 Dubai, Muscat (EK)
18:00 Frankfurt (LH)
18:10 Paris (AF)
21:35 Cairo (MS)
00:20 Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
00:55 London, Damascus (BA)
02:00 Belgrade (JU)

Royal Wings (RW)
08:30 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
08:50 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
18:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:35 Beirut (RJ)
06:35 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
07:00 Sanaa (YJ)
10:45 Cairo (RJ)
11:00 Frankfurt (RJ)
11:30 Rome (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:45 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:20 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
13:05 London (RJ)
20:05 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:20 Jeddah (RJ)
20:40 Bombay (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Doha (RJ)
04:45 Lamaca (RJ)

Other Flights
12:15 Aden, Sanaa (YJ)
14:00 Riyadh (SV)
14:00 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:00 Milan (AZ)
14:50 Vienna (OS)
16:00 Istanbul (TK)
18:35 Beirut (ME)
19:00 Dubai (EK)
22:35 Cairo (MS)
01:20 Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
03:00 Damascus, Belgrade (JU)
05:55 Damascus, London (BA)
06:10 Frankfurt (LH)
06:25 Paris (AF)

Royal Wings (RW)
06:00 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
19:45 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)

Ocalan suffers from heart problems

ANKARA (AP) — The rebel leader Abdullah Öcalan, who was captured in a Turkish military operation in the north of Iraq last week, is suffering from heart problems, a Turkish official said Thursday.

Ms. ... meet at 50th anniversary ... to defeat Milosevic

Home News

Health sector workshop highlights duplication of services, poor coordination

By Suha Ma'ayeh

AMMAN — Health officials and experts believe a lack of coordination between the country's private and public sectors and the often unnecessary expansion of the number of hospitals has resulted in a sharp decline in medical services standards.

Officials and experts, speaking at a two-day workshop which ended on Thursday, also agreed that the duplication of services provided by various health institutions and the increasing demand on treatment are placing huge strains on the country's health sector.

"The ministry's resources are limited in view of the increasing number of people demanding health services," Health Minister Ishaq Maraja said during a recent seminar depicting the achievements, challenges and expectations of the health sector.

"Jordan's population is expected to double by the year 2020. Therefore, we should be prepared to meet health requirements by that time," Maraja told the participants attending the seminar.

He added that upgrading the ministry's health services requires a high budget.

Jordan spends nearly eight per cent of its gross domestic product on health care — a percentage higher than that spent by some Western industrialised countries.

Maraja told the Jordan Times that the ministry is seeking to limit waste in the service-oriented sector "by trimming the workforce, or limiting waste resulting from consumables and drugs."

He stressed the need to draw up a medical care strategy which includes computerising all public health institutions.

"By computerising information, the ministry can obtain accurate figures which will help it regulate its work and pinpoint areas of waste."

The discrepancy in the standards of services offered, especially at the governorates' hospitals in urban areas, resulted in an increasing demand on major hospitals.

"The occupancy rate in minor state-run hospitals is low, while main hospitals are congested. This is a result of the unjustified referral of health clinics and minor hospitals to main hospitals," Maraja added.

"The government believes that a step should be taken to regulate the health sector to offer more services at reduced prices," he stressed.

The minister added that the government is seeking further cooperation with state-run health subsidies, the University of Jordan Hospital and the Royal Medical Services in an attempt to avoid the duplication of medical services.

"Our waste in health resources is also due to the lack of coordination between the private and the public sector," he added.

The ministry is seeking to involve the private sector to shoulder the responsibility of treating patients.

"The move will benefit patients covered by the ministry's insurance scheme and the private sector as well," the minister added.

Several worksheets presented at the seminar, hosted at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Forum, stressed the necessity of utilising the available resources to ensure the equal distribution of health services.

Sa'ad Hijazi, president of the Jordan University of Science and Technology, said improving the standards of health services at primary health care facilities is essential.

Teens express concerns at UNICEF Youth Forum

By Dima Hamdan

AMMAN — Teenagers have a lot on their minds, and a recent Youth Forum gave them the opportunity to publicly articulate their concerns.

Approximately 200 students, including three from the West Bank, took charge of setting the forum's agenda, during which teenagers highlighted several of their most pressing concerns.

Students from several governorates in the Kingdom discussed issues pertaining to adolescence, especially problems facing adolescent girls, and ways to improve their living conditions and increase their choices in life.

Maisa'a Natseh, a 17 year old girl from Ramallah, has attended several youth workshops in the West Bank. But said that this forum was different.

"What I liked most is that we were running the discussions and the supervisors did not interfere," she said. "It was a different experience because we were not told what to do. We had long discussions where we were able to identify the problems, analyse them and come up with solutions."

Her Royal Highness Princess Basma attended the final assembly, where students made a presentation of their main findings and the solutions they hoped to see implemented.

Students mainly focused on household issues, including compulsory marriage for girls, discrimination between males and females and the increasing consumption of tobacco and drugs among adolescents. They suggested that the minimum age for marriage should be raised from 16 years to 18-20 years.

The also said that there was a pressing need for intensive media awareness campaigns on all these issues, and suggested the establishment of youth centres, especially in rural areas and poor neighbourhoods, where both sexes can pursue extracurricular activities.

Students also expressed significant concern about the Tawjihi examination and the decreasing opportunities for university education. They complained that Tawjihi students fall under tremendous pressure before the exam, mainly because the examination, which tests students on four years of high school education, is extremely difficult. Furthermore, they said they believe that admission to universities does not rely on fair criteria, and proposed that admission would be determined by scores of both the Tawjihi examination and the university examination.

Students also called for introducing the Internet to schools and universities, as well as establishing colleges that offer labour training courses to accommodate those who cannot pursue university education.

"This experience has given me the chance to learn about the negative aspects of my thinking," said Ihab Nasrawi, a 16 year old boy.

Both Maisa'a and Ihab feel that youth in the West Bank and Gaza Strip share the same worries as their Jordanian peers.

They said that despite differences in secondary issues, students were both receptive of and influenced by each other's opinions.

But Maisa'a, who moved to Ramallah two years ago, believes that drug abuse is a more persistent issue in Palestine due to the hardship caused by the occupation and the intifada.

"I discovered that the mentality of Palestinian boys is not what I expected. There are some open-minded people," she said. "They were not severely affected by the occupation. They would be fighting and educating themselves at the same time."

It was an emotional and tearful good-bye for the teenage students who concluded the UNICEF Youth Forum, on Thursday, ending a three-day camp of free discussion and open dialogue.

Yusef Barodi, a UNICEF coordinator in Jerusalem, said that "this was a good step in establishing good connections with UNICEF Amman."

"I think it is very important for the Palestinian youth to leave [the Occupied Territories] for a while to release the pressure," he added. "[It's good for them] to see another environment, to learn how other youth are facing their problems and to exchange experiences."

Islamists claim president's seat in JEA internal elections

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — The Islamist trend of the Jordan Engineers Association on Thursday snatched the presidency of the JEA's Private Offices Bureau, but fell short of dominating the bureau's board.

The nationalist trend garnered six out of ten seats, including that of the vice president, while the remaining four were taken by the Islamists.

This is the first time in nearly ten years that the nationalist trend has obtained the majority of seats in the association internal elections, said a JEA official.

Issam Belbeisi, from the Islamist-led White List, secured the president's post with 655 votes, while Mu'alla Mehlar, his Green List competitor won 402 votes.

"We consider the Islamists the winners of the elections because the battle is for the helm, rather than the executive council," said an Islamist who is a member of the new executive council.

Raiq Allawneh, from the Green List, was able to grant the nationalists the vice president's post when he beat his opponent from the White List with 647 votes over Majid Tabba's 408 votes.

Other members of the 10-seat executive council are Saleh Rahal (684 votes), Kamel Habash (507), Qayed Al Zein (496), Khalid Samarah (469) and Jalal Saleh 456 votes, all from the Green List.

The Islamists are represented in the executive council by Marawan Malehi (666), Mansour Shamout (604) and Hamid Al Ayid (618). Many observers foresee that the results of the engineers elections is the turning point to the non-governmental institutions elections.

The Islamists, for the past ten years, dominated almost all professional association elections, beating a nationalist movement busy fighting amongst themselves over who should represent them.

"The nationalists, for the first time in many years were able to combine their efforts and agree among themselves on one candidate," said one nationalist supporter who preferred not to be named. "The nationalists' unity is the prime reason for their razor sharp victory, even though they did not win with absolute majority," he told the Jordan Times on Friday.

The engineers elections could be a big lesson for the nationalists in the future. The nationalist earlier this year were dealt repeated defeats in the Union of Professional Association Elections because of lack of cooperation, observers believe.

"The nationalists enjoy popularity among intellectuals and professionals, but the problem is that each one wants to be the 'boss,'" said Ramzi Asar, a nationalist supporter.

Many also believe that the Islamists' influence is waning. "It is true that the Islamists won almost all elections in the Kingdom for the past years, but their era was shady and questionable. Their slogans were bubbles in the air, punctured by reality," said one independent observer who preferred anonymity.



Journalists return Sherif to third term as JPA head

By Amy Henderson

AMMAN — Members of the Jordan Press Association on Friday returned controversial incumbent president Seif Sherif to his post in a predicted hands down elections contest.

Sherif, who enters his third term as JPA president, garnered 220 votes in one round of voting from his only two rivals for the post.

The president, a shareholder in Al Dustour Arabic daily newspaper, outlasted Musa Hawamdeh, formerly of Al Arab Al Yawm, and Khaled Mahedine, former director of the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Twenty-seven journalists cast blank ballots, the highest number of white papers returned in the association's history.

The election is the first held under the new JPA law, endorsed by both houses of Parliament last summer. Under the new law, the president, who will serve a two-year term, will serve for three years.

The law also abolished the quota system for the nine-member JPA council — three seats each for Petra, newspaper owners and private sector newspapers. The abolition of the quota was a move that many journalists said they hoped would limit the government's influence in the association and curb the potential for newspaper-owners to obstruct the interest of their employees.

But yesterday, journalists returned a council dominated by the official media, giving three seats to Petra, represented on the council by Ahmad Dabbas, Mohammad Melqawi and Omar Shneikat (incumbent), and three to the 61 per cent government-owned Al Ra'i, represented by former JPA deputy president Tarq Momani (incumbent), Ivam Qadarnani and Nader Khatatbeh (incumbent).

Al Dustour, which under the quota system enjoyed a domination of the board along with Al Ra'i, placed only one of its journalists, Hilmi Al Asmar, in a council seat. Al Asmar served on the 1996-1998 board. The remaining seats went to JPA general manager and owner of Al Fares monthly Fakri Abu Hamdch (incumbent), Al Hadath weekly chief editor Nidal Mansour (incumbent), who was active in the crusade against the introduction of the 1998 Press and Publications Law, and Dina Zorba, who owns and edits her own monthly women's magazine, Sharjati (Women of the Orient).

Representatives of three independent papers lost their seats: Zuhdi Al Badri of Al Hadaf (The Target), Nabil Ghishan of Al Arab Al Yawm, and Jamal Shawahin of Al Bilad.

Sixteen journalists ran for the council.

In the run-up to the elections journalists said they were unenthusiastic about the elections, which, they said, promised no real change without a change in the association's head. Ahead of Friday's balloting, the general assembly voted that the new council should reserve some of its budget to compensate journalists who say they were "arbitrarily dismissed" from the provocative Al Arab Al Yawm daily newspaper. The journalists have staged an open-ended sit-in in front of the Al Arab Al Yawm premises on University Road, and the JPA has said it would exercise all legal avenues to see the journalists return to work. Al Arab Al Yawm management has said its decision is final.

WHAT'S GOING ON

Films

- German film "Der Autenthalb" (with subtitles in English) at Goethe-Institut, Jabal Amman at 7:30 p.m.
- Children's film "Eine Familie" (Names: Beethoven) (in German) at Goethe-Institut, Jabal Amman at 5:00 p.m.
- "The Full Moon" at Books@Café, Jabal Amman on Sunday April 25 at 8:30 p.m. (Tel. 4650457/8).

Lebanese Film Festival

- Seminar on the Lebanese cinema at the Royal Cultural Centre at 5:30 p.m. (To be followed by four films "Baal and Death," "Our Reckless Wars," "The Strip is Fine," and "11 Pasteur Street").
- Four films "Jisr Al Qamar," "Ruins," "Between Me and You," and "Living Icons" at the Royal Cultural Centre on Sunday April 25 at 7:30 p.m.

Exhibitions

- Seventh Annual Book Exhibition at the Bishop's School, Jabal Amman, until April 29.
- Works by Jordanian ceramist Mahmoud Taha at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2), until May 6. Also showing an exhibition of photographs by Jordanian artist Adnan Sharif entitled "Spring at Darat Al Funun," until May 6.
- Works by Jordanian artist Shereen Audi Kurdi at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until April 28.
- Display of Iraq Al Amir collection at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation until April 29 (Tel. 5699141/2). (The exhibition includes handicraft, pottery, hand-woven fabrics, cushions, handmade paper, and food).

Criminal court sentences man to death in murder of pharmacist, domestic helper

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Criminal Court on Thursday sentenced a man to death after convicting him of robbing and murdering a pharmacist and a domestic helper in February last year.

The court found Samir Musa guilty of murdering Farouq Malhas, the 37-year-old owner of Wadi Al Nasser Pharmacy, on Feb. 3, 1998. The defendant was also convicted of killing a 50-year-old Sri Lankan domestic helper, identified as Imam, two days later.

He was also convicted by the same tribunal of the attempted murder of Abed Ali, 50-year-old owner of Dila Pharmacy, on Feb. 3, and was sentenced to a 20-year prison sentence with hard labour.

The murder of Malhas and the attack on another pharmacist a few hours later in the same day raised fears among the pharmaceutical profession that they had again become targets for armed robberies. In 1996, unidentified assailants killed three pharmacists in separate attacks in Amman. At that time, police said that the killers were drug addicts who were seeking narcotics.

According to court documents, the suspect, who is unemployed decided to rob the pharmacies, for financial reasons.

He entered Malhas' pharmacy located on Wadi Rimam Street, at 7:00 p.m. When the victim attempted to escape, he shot him once in the head, took his wallet, a gold ring, JD165 and a valium bottle before fleeing the scene.

Hours later in a second attempted robbery, he entered Dila Pharmacy in Jabal Taj and shot the pharmacist once in the shoulder. However, Musa fled the scene immediately because he ran out of ammunition and passers by interfered to help the pharmacist, the court said.

Few days later, he shot and killed the domestic helper in Jabal Weibdeh. The defendant claimed in court that he was planning to kill his sister because of her "immoral behaviour," and that he mistakenly thought that the domestic helper was his sister. However, the court rejected his claim, saying he had made contradictory statements during the course of his testimony.

The verdict, handed down by Judges Jihad Khasawneh, Abdullah Owais and Omar Khleifat, will be automatically reviewed by the Court of Cassation within 30 days.

An overtaxed facility, an overworked staff and underprivileged patients: Al Bashir Hospital cries for help

As the Health Ministry searches for funding for a new public hospital, pressure on Al Bashir, the only fully public hospital in the capital grows, writes Suha Ma'ayeh

AMMAN — Um Ahmad sat desperately on the stairs of the ageing out-patient clinic at the state-run Al-Bashir Hospital, that caters for up to nearly 5,000 patients a day.

She was waiting for hospital officials to call out her daughter's name, a routine procedure signalling that her turn to see a doctor is close.

Such scenes of anguished patients waiting patiently, sometimes endlessly at the 874-bed hospital, the capital's main public health care facility, were highlighted again when His Majesty King Abdullah paid a surprise to the hospital on Sunday.

Television showed him talking to patients and touring the overcrowded wards and waiting rooms in the hospital, the sole fully-fledged public hospital in Amman, home to over 1.25 million people. It offers services to civil employees and their families and to the needy in return for nominal fees.

Patients gave mixed assessments of their experience at Al Bashir.

"It takes us hours to see the doctor, but when you finally get to see him, he only has one minute for you," lamented Um Ahmad, 38, as she waited along with over 500 other patients.

"But those who have a wasta (connection) at the hospital do not wait like we do," Badria Subuh, 63, suffering from cardiovascular problems, told the King she was satisfied with the services offered at the department.

"The King asked me about the services and I told him they were good," she said.

Ibtisam, whose six-year-old daughter suffers from a urinary infection, said she was pleased with the level of services.

"Services are good, but we have to wait for a very long time to see the doctor," she added, while adding a stitch to a piece of cloth she was embroidering.

The hospital's director declined immediate comment on the level of services and future plans.

However, the government, it hands tied by a chronic budget deficit, has often said little can be done except improve operational aspects and services and cut down on the bloated bureaucracy.

Health Minister Ishaq Maraja said studies and plans to set up a 500-bed Prince

Hamzah hospital in Tareq, Tabarbour, to support Al-Bashir, have been completed.

"But the project hinges on the ministry's ability to secure funding," he told the Jordan Times on Tuesday.

"It will not act as a substitute to Al Bashir. It will offer support with its 500 beds," he added.

The government has also allocated \$12 million of a \$50 million World Bank loan given in 1998 to renovate Al Bashir's buildings, some whose construction and infrastructure dates to the 1950's.

Um Ahmad and other patients complained of negligence resulting from mounting pressure on the hospital's services.

Nabila Abu Arkoub said she admitted her 13-year-old son Murad to the hospital a few days ago.

"Murad was referred to the internal medicine ward after he was examined by doctors at the emergency department," she recalled.

"He slept there for two

nights and nobody looked after him, let alone the doctor who crossed out his own name and said he was not responsible [for his case]."

Other patients complained about cockroaches filling the hospital and said its main lifts, even some of those used to ferry patients to the surgery theatre, had been out of order for months.

"Patients are often carried on stretchers from floor to floor while those who have the energy are forced to walk," said one nurse who requested anonymity.

Maraja said maintenance works on the lift began on Monday, a day after the Royal visit.

Some hospital officials said the emergency unit, which handles hundreds of patients a day, is in dire need of doctors. Only two doctors man the night shift, they said.

"In some cases, nurses have to stitch the wounds of patients," said one witness.

While this reporter was speaking to a patient, a janitor

reassured one patient that his knee was in good condition after looking at an X-ray photo. Seconds later, he found his way through the crowd and continued cleaning the hospital, located in the impoverished Ashrafieh area, a crowded low-income area in eastern Amman. The understaffed hospital has for years been at the heart of public and official criticism for poor hygienic standards and for a shortage in medical services throughout most of its 80 departments.

Mohammad Khaled, 34, in excruciating pain, was admitted to the internal medicine ward for haemodialysis.

"He spent two days lying unconscious in the emergency department until a bed was finally made available," said his relative, a retired nurse.

Some other doctors working there said patients were often transferred to other non-related departments due to a bed shortage.

"Some patients suffering from internal problems are transferred to the ear, nose and throat department," said a resident doctor.

The Coronary Care Unit (CCU), which is supervised by three nurses, has 10 beds.

"There are many patients who need to be transferred to this unit but they go back home because all beds are occupied," said one nurse.

"They cannot afford treatment in private sector facilities."

"Patients, who are not covered by a health insurance scheme, pay only JD5 a night at the CCU unit. Services include medicine and a shot to thin the blood," said a nurse, working at the CCU since 1996. "They have no other place to go, since prices in the private sector are beyond their reach," she added.

In a country where the annual income per capita of a Jordanian is just below \$1,500, health officials estimate that only one million of the Kingdom's 4.6 million people can afford treatment at private hospitals.

Nearly 1.2 million civil servants and their families benefit from a health insurance scheme introduced in 1965 by the Ministry of Health and are treated at its 22 hospitals and its nearly 1,000 outpatient departments across the Kingdom. Those not covered by the scheme pay nominal fees covering 15 per cent of the actual cost of treatment.

Jordan spends about eight per cent of its gross domestic product income on health care.

Local columnists hailed the King's pre-planned visit to the hospital and expressed hope that officials would take action to ease the plight of patients.

"We know about the (limited) capabilities and so do His Majesty and the government," wrote Sultan Hattab in the Arabic daily Al Ra'i. "But through this trip, the King wanted to send the message that one can do a lot with something small, that one can exert more effort to close the gap and that one has to be concerned more with the needs of citizens instead of looking for personal privileges."

Congress fails to win support to form government

NEW DELHI (AP) — Sonia Gandhi's Congress party failed on Friday to win support from a majority in parliament to form a new government, raising the likelihood of early elections.

Mrs. Gandhi's hopes to lead India's next government were set back when Mulayam Singh Yadav, head of the Socialist Samajwadi party said he would not support either of the major blocs trying to cobble together a new government. The party controls 20 of the 543 seats in parliament.

There remained an outside chance that non-Congress parties would try to form a coalition, or that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), whose coalition lost a confidence vote a week ago, would seek the president's approval to try again.

Congress did not immediately concede defeat, though party workers milled around dejectedly at Mrs. Gandhi's home when the radio reported the decision. Mrs. Gandhi had promised to show President K.R. Narayanan by Friday that her plan to form a Congress-only minority government was supported by 272 members of legisla-

ture. Although that effort failed, she was set to meet the president anyway.

If no one succeeds in forming a government, India would face its third election in three years.

The Bombay stock exchange sensitive index dropped 1.2 per cent and the national stock exchange, the country's largest, fell by 1 per cent at the news. Although an elections call would drive the markets lower, investors said they would prefer the stability that a new round of voting might bring to the fractious 45-party legislature.

Earlier, leaders of two leftist parties that control seven parliament seats told the president they would not support a Congress government, while the leader of a five-seat party representing lower castes said the party preferred elections to choosing between Congress and the BJP.

"Both BJP and Congress are responsible for the poor state of the country," Yadav said in a written statement issued after his meeting with the president. He said the economic policies of previous Congress governments had plunged the country into debt, and that the Hindu-Nationalist coalition headed by the BJP had encouraged sectarianism.



Spokesman for Mulayam Singh Yadav's Socialist Party Mohammad Azam Khan (left) gestures as he addresses a press conference after north Indian regional leader Yadav, who holds 20 precious seats in parliament, withdrew his support from the Congress party in forming a new government April 23, 1999. The decision deepened the confusion left by the collapse of the Hindu nationalist government April 17, with the prospect of fresh elections looming even larger. At right is party spokesman Aram Singh (AFP photo)

Under these circumstances the Samajwadi party will not support any party which is trying to form a government," Yadav said.

However, Amar Singh, the general-secretary of Yadav's party, told reporters, "we don't want elections."

The Hindu-nationalist government led by Prime

Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee collapsed after Jayaram Jayalalitha withdrew the support of her regional party, known by its Tamil-language acronym, AIADMK. Jayalalitha met the president on Thursday and pledged the support of her 18 lawmakers to the Congress party.

Mrs. Gandhi's foreign origin and lack of political experience have been points of contention for some of

Congress' potential backers, as well as opponents.

"It is a hard fact that Sonia Gandhi has no political or parliamentary experience and she is much junior to her own party colleagues," BJP Vice President K.L. Sharma told reporters Friday.

"Despite all this, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, who proved to be a reluctant citizen of India, of foreign origin, has been projected as the lone

choice of the Congress, ... the campaign has just boomeranged."

Mrs. Gandhi, 52, the widow of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, entered politics last year. She adopted Indian citizenship 16 years after her marriage.

Rajiv Gandhi, who was prime minister until 1989, was assassinated in 1991. His mother, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, was assassinated in 1984.

Quake hits S. African gold mining town

JOHANNESBURG (R) — A strong earthquake hit the South African gold mining town of Welkom on Friday, forcing the evacuation of 1,000 underground miners and causing widespread damage to buildings.

The tremor, which measured 4.2 on the Richter scale, halted operations at a mine operated by the world's biggest gold producer, AngloGold Ltd.

The company said it was working to bring miners back to the surface through alternative mine shafts after power was cut.

There were no reports of deaths or serious injuries caused by the quake, which struck overnight at 2220 GMT and shook the town for six seconds, or from a series of aftershocks which lasted up to three hours after the initial seismic shock.

"There will be no production at the Matjhabeng (mine) today or tomorrow... We don't have any people trapped or injured," an

AngloGold spokesman said. "We had to reroute workers to other shafts to bring them to the surface after a power failure." The miners, who were working the night shift, would be brought back to the surface during Friday, AngloGold said.

The Matjhabeng mine produces about 15 tonnes of gold a year.

South Africa has some of the deepest mines in the world, with shafts stretching some three km below the surface.

The temperatures at these depths is nearly 30 degrees Celsius, but the heat would soar to more deadly levels if not for the huge refrigeration units pumping cool air from the surface.

A miner's deadliest enemies at these depths are earth tremors which can collapse a tunnel or rock face.

At another mine two years ago, a 3.1 tremor trapped 15 miners for several hours about 3 km underground

before they were rescued in what was nicknamed the "great escape".

South African gold mines are safer than they were years ago, but rock falls, pressure bursts, explosions and other accidents still claimed 267 lives and injured 5,449 in 1997.

In Welkom, situated in free state province, buildings were reported to have suffered heavy structural damage and water and power supplies cut.

"The emergency services are on the ground at the moment trying to restore services... The situation is under control as of now," police spokeswoman Elsabe Augoustides told the South African Press Association.

Police have been deployed in the free state province town to prevent looting.

Earthquakes measuring between four and five are powerful enough to cause heavy damage in populated areas.

Militia burn houses of separatists in E. Timor

DILI, Indonesia (AP) — Pro-Indonesian militiamen burned eight houses belonging to separatist activists in East Timor, one day after leaders of the rival factions signed a peace deal, police said Friday.

The attack in the town of Ambeno cast doubt on pledges of reconciliation by armed groups that this month have killed dozens of people suspected of campaigning for independence in the Indonesian-controlled territory.

Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 and annexed it a year later.

A group of 100 assailants with clubs and machetes poured gasoline Thursday inside the houses, most of which had been abandoned by fearful separatists, a police officer said.

Three men were taken to a hospital with stab wounds, said the officer, who did not identify him-

self in line with police procedure. Residents said the attackers were members of red and white iron, a militia that attacked villagers on April 6 in a church compound in the town of Liquica. Religious leaders said at least 25 people died.

On Wednesday, militia leaders and their pro-independence foes signed a peace agreement that failed to address the key issues of disarmament and the political future of the former Portuguese colony.

The deal was signed in Dili, the seaside capital of East Timor and site of a militia rampage on April 17 that left as many as 20 people dead. It was followed by a symbolic handover to police of 11 firearms belonging to militia groups that remain heavily armed.

At U.N. headquarters in New York, negotiators said Thursday that Indonesia

probably won't sign onto a U.N. autonomy proposal for East Timor at talks this week because it needs more time for consultations at home.

In a policy reversal, Indonesia has said it would let go of East Timor if its people reject an autonomy offer in a July ballot. However, escalating violence between supporters and opponents of independence has jeopardised the vote.

The Indonesian military has been accused of arming pro-government militias to fight Timorese separatists and disrupt the ballot. Meanwhile, separatist guerrillas have stepped up attacks on security forces.

Police speculated that the attack in Ambeno, 260 kilometres west of Dili, was retaliation for the alleged kidnapping a week ago of three militiamen by pro-independence activists.

Al Fayed lawyers seek British diplomats on Diana death

PARIS (AFP) — An appeals court here is to examine a request by lawyers of Egyptian businessman Mohammed Al Fayed to interview two British diplomats about the death of Britain's Princess Diana and her companion Dodi Al Fayed, legal sources confirmed Friday.

Al Fayed's lawyers, Bernard Darteville and Georges Kiejman, made the appeal after the judges investigating the August 1997 car crash that killed Diana and Al Fayed's son Dodi allegedly refused to interview the diplomats.

One of the diplomats is said to be a member of Britain's counter-espionage service MI6. They asked the judges to carry out the interviews after being informed on Jan. 29 that the inquiry had been wrapped up.

Al Fayed, the owner of the British luxury store

Harrods, has repeatedly accused British secret services of being behind the deaths of his son and Diana, as well as their driver, in a car crash in a Parisian road tunnel.

He has accused the British establishment of never having been able to accept the idea that the mother of their future king was living with a Muslim.

The inquiry found that the three died when their Mercedes car, travelling at high speed and chased by press photographers, hit the 13th pillar of the Alma Bridge road tunnel.

The driver, Rene Paul, was found to have been drinking before the accident.

Despite exhaustive investigations, a white Fiat Uno car which was said to have hit the Mercedes just before the crash has never been traced.

Aid agencies pull out of rebel-infested western Uganda

KAMPALA (AFP) — International aid agencies have withdrawn from western Uganda's Bundibugyo district due to increased rebel violence in the region by Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), aid officials said Friday.

"We decided to pull out after the rebel attack in Bundibugyo town on Monday night. We are not planning to suspend operations, but we are just waiting to see how the situation develops," U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) country representative in Uganda, Michael Jones, told AFP here.

Medecins sans Frontieres-France (Doctors without Borders — MSF — France) has also pulled out of the area, while British agency, Actionaid, withdrew last month because of the deteriorating security situation.

The WFP's move came after rebels entered Bundibugyo town on Monday night and began shooting, killing at least two civilians and wounding an unknown number of others.

The rebels were reported-

ly targeting the Picfare Hotel in Bundibugyo town, a popular joint for army commanders in the area.

Rebel activities in the west have increased since the start of the year, since when at least 80 people have died in raids, including 30 killed last week in attacks on Bundibugyo and the neighbouring Kabarole district.

Aid agencies estimate that between 50,000 and 70,000 people have been displaced by the rebel violence in Bundibugyo district alone.

Since the start of April, the Ugandan army has instituted military convoys to escort vehicles moving along the main road linking Bundibugyo town to the rest of the country.

"We are definitely going to remain in the region in the next few months, as the displaced people have now missed the planting season. They also lack plastic sheeting for cover from rain — a great potential for cholera due to poor sanitation," Jones told AFP.

WFP was in the process of delivering 200 tonnes of

food for distribution to the displaced when they were forced to halt operations.

The ADF rebels — a coalition of a formerly defunct National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) rebel group and the Tabligi Islamic sect, said to be aided by ex-government soldiers from Rwanda and former Zaire, now renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) — have been active in western Uganda since November 1996.

They currently operate out of camps in the Ruwenzori Mountains straddling the common border with the DRC.

Uganda justified its intervention in the eight-month civil war in the DRC on the grounds that President Laurent Kabila allowed rebel groups to operate out of eastern DRC. Last week, Kabila and Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni signed a peace pact at a meeting in Libya, but a Kampala government spokesman later said that it "was simply a statement of our desires — what we

would like to happen in Congo".

Other major players, including Rwanda and the DRC rebels themselves, have not signed the deal.

Meanwhile, NALU has warned in a letter faxed to the Association of British Travel Agents that U.S. and European nationals, particularly from Britain, Germany and Scandinavian nations, will be rebel targets because of their nations' support for the Ugandan government, which they accuse of being undemocratic.

NALU had earlier claimed responsibility for the March 1 killings of 10 foreign tourists and four Ugandans at southwest Uganda's Bwindi National Park, but survivors and locals denied this, saying the attackers spoke French and had identified themselves as Rwandan Hutu rebels.

NALU was active up to 1992 when its leader was killed while in exile in Kenya and remained dormant until 1996 when it was revived and teamed up with the ADF.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bonn says German reporter accused of spying

BONN (AP) — Yugoslavia has accused a detained German television reporter of spying, the foreign ministry said Friday. Hans-Peter "Pit" Schnitzler, southeast Europe correspondent for the Sat-1 network, is being held by Yugoslav military police at an unknown location, ministry spokesman Andreas Michaelis said. The spokesman rejected the spying accusation as groundless and demanded Schnitzler's release. Sat-1 "knows about his professional activities at the time of his detention, and on that basis there is not the slightest evidence to justify such charges," Michaelis said. Schnitzler has not been formally charged with spying, he said. Germany has sent a diplomatic note seeking access to Schnitzler, but there has been no answer from Yugoslavia, Michaelis said. Germany is dealing with Japanese diplomats in Belgrade, who are handling German interests in Yugoslavia since relations broke off over the war for Kosovo. Sat-1 said last weekend it had lost contact with 56-year-old Schnitzler in Yugoslavia after Serbian authorities seized his equipment and car and he was supposed to be headed home. He left Belgrade around midday Friday and was to have contacted his editors after reaching the Croatian border, but no call ever came, according to the network. Sat-1 said it had told Schnitzler, based in Vienna, Austria, to leave Belgrade because the loss of his equipment and car made it impossible for him to work.

Cuba criticised at Human Rights Commission

GENEVA (AFP) — The Human Rights Commission censured Cuba for human rights abuses on Friday by passing a resolution calling on Havana to respect fundamental freedoms. The 53-member commission narrowly passed the resolution sponsored by the Czech Republic and Poland by 21 votes to 20. There were 12 abstentions. The resolution expressed its concern at the "continued violation" of human rights in Cuba, including freedom of expression, association and assembly. The resolution also highlighted the "continued repression" of political opponents and the detention of dissidents, most recently of the four members of "Grupo de Trabajo de la Disidencia Interna." The Cuban government was urged to release all people detained for peacefully expressing their political, religious and social views. The resolution also called on Havana to sign U.N. human rights covenants. Last year, Cuba defeated a human rights resolution sponsored by the United States.

Sri Lanka begins forensic tests on mass grave

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lankan authorities have begun forensic tests on some two dozen skeletons found at a play ground in the island's embattled northern town of Jaffna, officials said Friday. The remains unearthed from the Durappa Stadium early in April were brought to Colombo Thursday for tests, officials said. The Jaffna district judge A.E. Ehananthan, who was present at the exhumation, has ordered tests on the bones which some officials believe could belong to people who died or were killed about 10 years ago. The latest discovery came as the authorities were investigating an alleged mass grave at Chemmani in the Jaffna peninsula where some 400 to 600 Tamil men and women, victims of extra-judicial killings, are believed to be buried. Police have begun recording statements from relatives of victims and forensic tests in the Chemmani case are underway. Government forces wrested control of Jaffna in December 1995 after driving out the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam who ruled the region as a de facto separate state for nearly five years.

China finds recorders from Korean Air crash

SHANGHAI (R) — China has recovered both the flight data and cockpit voice recorders from last week's crash of a Korean Air cargo plane, industry sources and an official newspaper said on Friday. "They have found the flight data recorder and the cockpit voice recorder," an industry source said. "It looks like the flight data recorder was probably pretty badly damaged and they're going to try to retrieve some data off of it." The MD-11 heavy freighter crashed shortly after takeoff from Shanghai on April 15, killing nine people — including the three crewmen — and injuring more than 30 on the ground. The Shanghai star said the "black boxes" were recovered this week and had been sent to the United States for analysis. The newspaper quoted an official of the South Korean consulate in Shanghai as saying the flight data recorder had been severely damaged by explosion and it was unclear if the device could provide information about the crash. Officials from China's aviation general administration, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board all declined to comment. Korean Air, South Korea's national carrier, announced a management shakeup on Thursday after senior executives resigned to take responsibility for the crash and a spate of mishaps.

Funeral mistake — wrong body in casket

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Mourners at a funeral service were aggrieved to find the wrong body in their beloved's casket, according to a report Friday. At the service on Monday night, the widow of a 79-year-old Melbourne man asked for a final viewing of her husband's body. Parish Priest Father Julian told Channel 10 TV that the 80 mourners were stunned when they found that the body shown to the woman was not her husband's. "I talked to them and I said to them: 'Now we'll wait for the other body, the true body, to come,'" the priest said. The service proceeded after the man's body was located at the funeral company's headquarters. Funeral director John Grant said two identical coffins had stood side by side and a staff member put the wrong name plate on one of them. "It's every funeral director's nightmare that mistakes like this can happen," Grant said. Grant said the employee was devastated and that the company had made an official apology and offered financial compensation.

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WS IN BRIEF

says German reporter accused of spying

Yugoslavia has accused a German reporter of spying. The German reporter, Peter "Pit" Schmitt, was held by Yugoslav military police. The Yugoslav military police spokesman said Schmitt was arrested on the grounds of espionage. Schmitt was arrested on the grounds of espionage. Schmitt was arrested on the grounds of espionage.

Cuba criticised at an Rights Commission

Human Rights Commission has criticised Cuba. The commission said Cuba was in breach of its obligations under the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man. The commission said Cuba was in breach of its obligations under the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man.

ika begins forensic tests on mass grave

Forensic tests are being conducted on a mass grave. The tests are being conducted by the International Rescue Committee (IRC). The tests are being conducted by the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

ina finds recorders in Korean Air crash

Investigators have found recorders in the Korean Air crash. The recorders were found in the wreckage of the plane. The recorders were found in the wreckage of the plane.



Newly elected 'Miss Intercontinental' Mine Erbaykent from Turkey (centre) poses with second placed Mirelis Peguero from Puerto Rico (left) and third placed Veronica Gonzales from Uruguay, early April 23, 1999, in Bochum. Twenty seven women aged between 17 and 26 years took part in the elections for 'the most beautiful woman of all continents', chosen by an international jury (AFP photo)

Massive looting of Liberia border town following attack

MONROVIA (AFP) — Gunmen from Guinea who attacked a northern Liberia border town earlier this week looted offices of aid organisations and U.N. agencies, officials said on Friday. The U.S.-based International Rescue Committee (IRC) operating in Voinjama, 260 km north of the Liberian capital, said massive looting of its offices forced staff to suspend operations in the town. The Liberian government said its forces repelled Wednesday's attack, during which foreign diplomats and 17 aid workers were temporarily kidnapped. However independent sources told journalists that some fighting was still taking place around Voinjama and in nearby villages. On Thursday, the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP), whose seven staff members were temporarily taken hostage, said fighting continued Wednesday night between rebels and army forces in the bush outside the town. Authorities referred to the activity merely as "cleaning-up operations." Aid workers, who were flown Thursday to Monrovia aboard a U.N. helicopter, said the armed men had commandeered 13 relief vehicles and stole their personal belongings. They also reported widespread looting by government security forces of U.N. warehouses as well as private residences following the retreat of the attackers from the town. One aid official said the Guineans shot and wounded relief driver John Kamara for refusing to turn over the keys to his vehicle. He also said the body of one attacker, who died at the Voinjama hospital, was taken away by his colleagues when they were retreating from the city Centre. The regional director of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Abu Moussa, said the attackers were armed with AK-47s, rocket-propelled grenades and machetes. WFP's regional director for west Africa, Paul Ares, described the armed men as "a rag-tag group without any command structure." Meanwhile, hundreds of fleeing civilians, including Sierra Leonean refugees living in Voinjama and nearby villages, have arrived in the Liberian central city of Gbarnga, 160 km north-east of Monrovia, seeking refuge. Richard Roberts told the independent The

'More Khmer Rouge leaders could face charges'

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Notorious Khmer Rouge leaders Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea will likely face criminal charges in Cambodian courts, Prime Minister Hun Sen said in an interview aired Friday. Hun Sen said prosecutors investigating former Khmer Rouge military chief Ta Mok would also most likely level charges against former head of state Khieu Samphan and ideology tsar Nuon Chea. "According to my knowledge, because the scale of the genocide is so great they cannot avoid (being charged by prosecutors)," Hun Sen said on state-run television. "What happens to Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea is that they will most likely confront charges from prosecutors," he said. The ultra-Maoist Khmer Rouge ruled Cambodia from 1975-1979 during which up to two million people died through torture, starvation, overwork and execution. His comments were a stunning reversal of earlier claims that any attempt to bring them to trial could send the country back into a state of civil war. "Ta Mok was arrested. Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea surrendered, but surrender to the government doesn't mean they are free from being charged by the courts," Hun Sen said. He said they had only been allowed to surrender and were given no guarantees of immunity from future prosecution. "To charge or not to charge these people is the job of the prosecutors, not our (the government's) duty. To my understanding they might be charged." "I think the court will not just investigate Ta Mok only, but others as well in the same package," he added. The prime minister made no mention of former Khmer Rouge foreign minister Ieng Sary, who defected to the government in 1996, and is living in a newly-built villa in the capital Phnom Penh. Meanwhile Friday, the military court investigating judge responsible for the case against Ta Mok dismissed "speculation" that he had decided to call Khieu Samphan, Nuon Chea and Ieng Sary as witnesses in Ta Mok's trial. "Only I know who will be a witness, nobody else. Some people speculate that Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan and Ieng Sary are involved, but that is speculation," Ngim Sam An told reporters. "Everybody knows that they may be involved in the case, but nothing has been decided yet," he said, adding a summons would soon be issued for those required as witnesses. Ta Mok, the former chief of staff of the late Khmer Rouge supreme Pol Pot, was arrested on March 6. Dubbed "the butcher" for his fearsome reputation, Ta Mok has been charged under a 1994 law outlawing the now-faded Khmer Rouge guerrilla movement, whose long-running rebellion fizzled out last year following a string of defeats and defections. Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea surrendered to the government on Christmas Eve 1998 and now live in comfortable retirement in Pailin, the former northern stronghold of the Khmer Rouge. Pol Pot, who as head of the Khmer Rouge ruled Cambodia with an iron fist in the 1970s, died in the jungles bordering Thailand in April last year. Although Ta Mok is the only Khmer Rouge leader to have been charged and facing trial, genocide researchers have been pinning their hopes on him implicating former comrades. Despite calls by the international community and the United Nations for an international tribunal, Hun Sen has insisted on a local trial with the aid of foreign judges and prosecutors.

Britain calls MI5 into bomb blast probe

LONDON (R) — Britain's domestic intelligence agency MI5 has been called in to help investigate a London bomb attack which is believed to be linked to extremist racist groups, a police spokesman said on Friday. The Scotland Yard spokesman said four far right groups had so far claimed responsibility for last Saturday's nail bomb explosion in a market street in Brixton, an area with a large black population. "We are treating this as a racist crime," Detective Chief Superintendent John Bunn told a news conference. On Monday, the already known racist group Combat 18 claimed responsibility for the attack in which nearly 40 people were injured. Bunn revealed that on the same day three other far right groups had claimed responsibility. He did not name them. The group's name refers to the positions in the alphabet of Adolf Hitler's initials. Many community leaders in Brixton are convinced the bomb was directly aimed at the local black population. Bunn said police investigations were complicated by the possibility the area where the bomb went off in Brixton may not have been the original target. He said a bus broke down in the area before the explosion, and the bomber may have been a passenger. "It is possible the bomber got off the bus and was on his way somewhere else," Bunn said. Bunn said that aside from Irish Republican Army (IRA) and Middle Eastern guerrilla attacks in the 1980s, there had been no similar bomb explosions for "many years". "MI5 has become involved in the inquiry," he said. The famed agency has responsibility for counter intelligence operations in Britain. Racial tension in London rose sharply in February after an inquiry slammed police for their handling of a probe into the fatal stabbing six years ago of an 18-year-old black man, Stephen Lawrence. Police were accused of institutional racism and professional incompetence in failing to bring anyone to justice despite investigations of five prime suspects. Race riots ravaged Brixton in the 1980s and were blamed on heavy-handed policing of the community.

'Yeltsin healthy enough to stay on'

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin is healthy enough to stay in power even past the end of his presidential term in 2000, his chief Kremlin doctor said in a newspaper interview published on Friday. "Boris Nikolayevich cannot run 10 kilometres and could not work out with 200 kilogramme weights... but he's quite capable of something else," Sergei Mironov told Komsomolskaya Pravda. Doubts about the president's health are a constant political question in Russia, and rare interviews with his doctors often draw the attention of those trying to guess Yeltsin's next move. Ill-health has forced Yeltsin to the sidelines for months, but he has been known to defy predictions and bounce back. In recent weeks he has increased his visibility and made a number of strong statements against NATO air strikes on Kosovo, although he has still appeared slow-moving and hoarse-voiced. "Boris Nikolayevich's form today is good enough to let him carry on even beyond 2000," Mironov said. Yeltsin has said he would step down when his four-year second term ends. Mironov said Yeltsin, 68, has often been a difficult patient, ignoring advice that he work less hard. "First of all he is the president and therefore we can only recommend, not dictate, things to him," Mironov said. "There is no doctor who has enough power to limit the length of the president's working day," Mironov said Yeltsin normally goes to bed at 10.00 p.m., but he needs only between four and five hours of rest a day. He works for about 12 hours a day. "We think he should sleep for longer," he said. Yeltsin was taken to hospital twice this year after suffering an acute bleeding stomach ulcer in January. He had heart surgery in 1996.

Pope challenges artists to inspire next millennium

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope John Paul II, a poet and playwright as well as video star, is calling on men and women of the arts to join forces to chart a new spiritual course for humanity in the next millennium. In a letter released by the Vatican on Friday, John Paul said he is counting on creative people to provide inspiration in a "new alliance" between the church and artists. Noting that he lives and works among some of the most splendid masterpieces of all time — from Michelangelo and Raphael's artistry to architecture by Bernini in St. Peter's Square — the Pope wrote that the church's dealings with the arts were steeped in time. "With this letter, I turn to you, the artists of the world, to assure you of my esteem and to help consolidate a more constructive partnership between art and the church," the Pontiff wrote. "On the threshold of the third millennium, my hope for all of you who are artists is that you will have an especially intense experience of creative inspiration," the Pope added. "May the beauty which you pass on to generations still to come be such that it will stir them to wonder." "Thanks to this enthusiasm, humanity, every time it loses its way, will be able to lift itself up and set out again on the right path," the letter said. A playwright and actor in his

More witnesses in Macau mob boss trial say they saw nothing

MACAU (AP) — A reputed crime boss looked confident and relaxed as his trial wrapped up Friday, with witness after witness denying any knowledge of an alleged attempt to intimidate gaming table workers at Macau's biggest casino. The lead judge acknowledged outside the courtroom that the prosecution was suffering some shortcomings in its case against Wan Kuok-Koi, alias "broken Tooth Koi." "Usually in cases like this, witnesses have a hard time coming forward," said judge Joao Torao, who is presiding over a three-judge panel that will deliver verdicts Thursday. "That is the problem," Torao told a reporter. "What can we do without proof?" Wan, 44, is accused of coercing the Lisboa casino employees to stop working at a Chinese dominoes gaming table run by rival gambling figure Lau Wing-Kung, in hopes of harming Lau's business. The coercion charge carries a penalty of up to five years in prison. Macau's casinos have seen profits dwindle amid Asia's economic crisis, and mobsters have been fighting hard over what's left over. Macau, which is about 64 km west of Hong Kong, reverts later this year from Portuguese to Chinese rule. Nobody called to testify on Friday seemed to know anything about any intimidation attempts by Wan, who allegedly is a boss in Macau's notorious 14k Chinese Triad gang. The prosecution played a videotape from security cameras at the Lisboa that showed Wan and about 10 other people moving through the casino's various gaming rooms. Later, Wan was shown along with a co-defendant, Leung Weng-Sang, who was filmed talking to workers at the gaming table. Leung also was shown picking up a metal money box and throwing it at the table. In closing arguments, prosecutor Manuel Corra said the tape proved his case, arguing that in one segment, Wan's gestures showed "that everything was premeditated."

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NATO's new role

AS NATO celebrates its 50th anniversary, the conflict over Kosovo threatens to turn into an all-out war that might engulf the whole of the Balkan region. The war, which the West does not recognise as such, is putting NATO's identity and sense of mission at stake. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has been searching for a new role and identity. For a while, Islam replaced communism as a threat to the West. But that "danger" soon went into an eclipse when it was realised that Islam as such does not really pose any threat to any civilisation or nation.

Ethnic cleansing and genocidal warfare waged by the Serbs against their fellow Bosnian Muslims in the mid-nineties and the subsequent ethnic uprising in the former Yugoslavia provided NATO with a new set of circumstances that helped it find a new role for itself. It intervened militarily to stop the bloodshed in Bosnia and broker a peace deal at Dayton, Ohio between the fighting factions.

The Kosovo crisis offered NATO another opportunity to assert itself in Europe. When NATO finally acted to stop another wave of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans and the mass cold blooded killing of ethnic Albanians on moral grounds, it had set a precedent for itself as well as for the international community. While Belgrade and Moscow see in the NATO intervention an attempt to extend NATO's sphere of influence and destroy the only remaining communist state in eastern Europe, NATO capitals view their military strikes against Yugoslavia as a legitimate attempt to stop a naked assault on Western principles in the European continent itself.

NATO has in effect changed from a purely defensive alliance into a machine intent on enforcing the principles of democracy and human rights and preventing crimes against humanity in the heartland of Europe. NATO issued repeated threats and ultimatums to Yugoslavia to stop its carnage to the extent that NATO's own credibility became at stake. When war broke out, it was clear from the start that NATO cannot lose the war. Belgrade should realise, therefore, that NATO cannot emerge from this war without a decisive victory. The prestige and credibility of NATO are at the core of the conflict and not only the crisis' moral and ethical dimensions. The international community it appears cannot rely only on the U.N. to stop war crimes and crimes against humanity. The international organisation has become literally paralysed in the face of the veto power of its five permanent members. As long as the Security Council cannot function properly, swiftly and effectively in the face of grave violations of human rights and humanitarian law, there will always be a need for NATO to fill the vacuum. That's exactly what happened over the Kosovo conflict. The irony in all this is that NATO is still not poised to intervene so forcefully elsewhere in the world where similar war crimes and crimes against humanity could occur.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Kheirallah Kheirallah commented on the significance of recent developments in Kosovo. NATO is not going to lose its first war since it was established 50 years ago, and it will be ready to send ground forces to Kosovo as soon as the allies feel that airstrikes have fulfilled their purpose. Kheirallah said. Thus, airstrikes against Serbian forces, and attempts to destroy infrastructure will continue, "sending" Yugoslavia back in time. Kheirallah added, Iraq is aware of what is happening in Kosovo, and it should hasten to improve its internal situation. Instead of "gambling" on Milosevic winning the war, said the writer. If any party in Baghdad is interested in getting Iraq out of trouble, it should exploit the Kosovo war to launch a dialogue with the U.S. as the most important thing to "rescue" the Iraqi people, even at the expense of the regime, he argued.

Al Dustour's Oreib Rintawi commented on Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh's recent statements that Jordan's media is terrified and that it should be a voice for the whole nation and not only the government. Although the statement itself was not new, Rawabdeh's "tone of voice," and his record are grounds for optimism that the media situation will be improving, said Rintawi. The writer said that random appointments of many unqualified people and administrative incompetence have troubled the media's performance, and he agrees with Rawabdeh's statement. Junior employees and officials should not be blamed, as the "successive generations" of high-ranking officials have been responsible for the media's problems, he added. In this respect, Jordan's official media shares the same problems as similar systems in the Arab World, where the official media suffers from tunnel vision and "shyness," and always fear "hot" topics and defend officials, according to Rintawi. The writer hoped that Rawabdeh's inclination to support and protect those who want to improve the media will be implemented.

Regional tour an unqualified success

THE SYRIAN-JORDANIAN summit held last week was the crowning factor in the concerted campaign launched by His Majesty King Abdullah to straighten out Jordan's relations with the Arab World and give them an additional push, so that the Kingdom's Arab brethren recognise Jordan's aim of maintaining a perfectly balanced relationships.

The King's ongoing Arab tour started with Egypt and took in Saudi Arabia, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Libya in addition to Syria.

Other countries in the King's itinerary include the rest of the Arab states in the Gulf as well as some in North Africa before he proceeds to Washington on his first trip there as the head of state of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The central theme throughout the King's talks with his Arab counterparts has been simple and straight: The state of peace between Jordan and Israel is the result of a strategic option adopted by the Kingdom. While there cannot be any turning back from this, Jordan is committed to ensuring that its ties with Israel are not at the expense of its relations with Arab countries and

have no bearing whatsoever on the Kingdom's Arab identity.

Similarly, while Jordan is anxious to see an end to the suffering of the people of Iraq, it supports the Arab majority view that Baghdad should adhere to and implement the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions as a condition for a total and complete end to the sweeping U.N. sanctions imposed on that country. However, Jordan also sees it as its Muslim, Arab and humanitarian obligation to do whatever it can to alleviate the suffering of the people of Iraq.

That position should not be seen as support and endorsement of the policies and actions of the Iraqi regime. Jordan opposes any foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Iraq, and believes that such meddling would only result in chaos and disaster — the dismemberment of that country would be catastrophic for the entire region.

These were the central themes for King Abdullah's discussions with his Arab counterparts. And from what we have seen so far, it is clear that the message has not only been received loud and clear in the Arab World but has also drawn a highly positive response. The warmth of the welcome

King Abdullah received in the Gulf, particularly the United Arab Emirates, whose leader Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan is known for his farsightedness and political acumen.

Two other political heavyweights in the region, King Fahd Ben Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, have equally strongly accepted and endorsed King Abdullah's campaign to make clear Jordan's political stands. And the enthusiasm with which Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi welcomed and treated King Abdullah in Libya was a forerunner for the crowning glory — the Monarch's visit to Damascus and talks with President Hafez Al Assad.

One could delve deeper and analyse why and how Jordan is consolidating its relations with the Arab World.

There are many in the region and outside who would argue that the late King Hussein had already made clear Jordan's positions to the Arab World, and the Arab leaders should have accepted it on good faith.

But that is not the way things work in the Arab World.

There are things that need to be done — and not be taken for

Jordanian Perspective



Dr. Musa Kellani

granted as having been accomplished — and words that need to be said in person — and not be taken for granted as messages already conveyed. That principle and approach have been embraced by King Abdullah and hence his Arab tour — not to mention the very basic concept of paying his respects to his Arab elders by visiting them in their homes.

Assad was indeed seen as the most difficult among them all, given the strain in ties between Amman and Damascus since the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty in October 1994 against the backdrop of the basic

difference in strategy in the peace process with Israel. But, as reported last week, Assad has come to terms with the reality of Jordan's strategic decisions and told King Abdullah that he was opening a new era in bilateral ties.

We, in Jordan, have every reason to be jubilant about the success of our King in streamlining the country's relations at the Arab level — the ground for which was paved indeed by the Arab, regional and international turnout for King Hussein's funeral.

In fact, the warmth that greeted King Abdullah at every Arab capital he visited is an emphatic Arab recognition of the wisdom of his father's decision to name him as the heir to the Hashemite Throne. Arab leaders have come to appreciate that King Hussein's decision to name Abdullah as his Crown Prince only a few days before his death did not come out of a vacuum, but stemmed from his conviction in the abilities and skills of his son. As such, the qualitative leap that Jordan's relations with Arabs have taken is as much a testimony of King Hussein's far-sightedness as the emergence of Abdullah's skills as a statesman and head of state fit to follow in the footsteps of his father.

Terrified of the press law

IN THE laid-back and relatively calm atmosphere of Jordan, exciting developments are far and few in between. There are no presidents, for example, under attack for lying about their sexual adventures, as one would find in the U.S. This, however, is probably due to the fact that there aren't even any presidents. Nor are there bombing campaigns or mass expulsions of ethnic minorities, as is currently the case in Europe. People are always asking me about the state of my affairs, and I usually have to answer that things are about the same. Last week, however, a bombshell of sorts knocked me out of my comfortable, if somewhat staid, routine. An announcement was made that cut right to the heart of the human experience, or at least the experience of those humans involved in journalistic matters in Jordan. The official Jordanian media, Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh revealed on one recent afternoon, sucks.

The good premier didn't use that term, of course. A "terrified department" that lacks creativity and the ability to accurately convey useful information is the phrase he used to describe the media. But the meaning is the same. And, in any event, whether one prefers assessing the media's performance in Rawabdeh's terms, which are more descriptive, or mine, which are more blunt and, I believe, more accurate, the country's information organs, including radio, television and newspapers, are in a sorry state.

It's not difficult for any reasonable person to reach the same conclusion that Rawabdeh and I have. Television programming is full of trite, boring shows. Print media focuses more on what prominent figures attending such-and-such meeting rather than what was discussed or agreed upon. Jordan Television's Channel Three mysteriously broadcasts for a few hours per week before disappearing off the airwaves, lending it the appearance of a pirate station operated by a bored, rich, nerdy

teenager in Abdoun rather than a bona fide channel. Every outlet, wherever one looks, is apparently affected by this media malaise. Rawabdeh's bold proclamation hopeful will serve as the opening shot in the war to salvage the official information outlets from ignominious doom.

However, it is difficult to believe that the media could have sunk to such lows without warning in a manner so sudden so as to preclude government action. If, in fact, the media is in dire straits, as the prime minister and I believe, then previous governments, as the sponsors of official information outlets, deserve full blame, at the very least for gross incompetence but probably for being active agents in such mediocrity. Interference in the affairs of newspapers and stations, failure to divulge vital information for the public record, various officials who, in addition to their duties in the government, take upon themselves the roles of English teacher, Arabic translator, and editor, and various other acts cut into journalistic integrity.

One also wonders what agent, real or imaginary, caused the media to become "terrified." It is possible, of course, that the media is "terrified" by some irrational factor, much like some young children are frightened of the dark, but let's, as the blunt saying goes, cut the crap. If the media is terrified, it is for a very real reason, and this reason has a name: the Press and Publications Law. Suppose, for instance, that I write an article which warns of possible risks to the value of the Jordanian dinar. In such case, I face the threat of prison and/or fines, because anything that can be construed as harming the national currency is an offence under this law (Article 42, paragraph 12). This is tantamount to sending a doctor to jail for giving a patient a worrying diagnosis. Let's try another scenario: an article with my byline urges all people who believe that the earth is flat to meet in a local cafe to discuss means of coun-

Out of Order



Brian Brown

tering propaganda issued by "round-earthers." In this case, the editorial staff risk imprisonment and/or fines, since publishing anything that incites "public gatherings" violates Article 42, paragraph 14. The media has a right to be terrified, because anything published can be used against them in a court of law.

This is the state of the official media here in Jordan. The situation as it is needs more than a "frank" assessment of what is wrong, because everyone knows there are major problems. Practical steps, such as scrapping the press law, should be taken to end the "terror" and mediocrity afflicting journalists. And a little more pay wouldn't hurt either. Failure to move beyond simplistic diagnoses is just like the pot calling the kettle black.

RECOMMENDED READING: Angela's Ashes, by Frank McCourt. Irish eyes aren't smiling in this novel, which recounts the author's childhood in the city of Limerick. McCourt presents one comical episode of his life after another, all against the backdrop of unmitigated misery and poverty in the 1940s and 50s in Ireland. The author has every emotion in Angela's Ashes with his account of bullying schoolmasters, perpetual hunger and the English.

The Turkish and Algerian elections

By George S. Hishmeh

WASHINGTON — The disappointment in the results of the national election in Algeria, shared worldwide, lies primarily not only in the fact that it dealt a serious blow to the democracy-aspiring Algerians but it also contributed to the stereotypical image here of the Middle East. In other words, the military reigns supreme in most Arab states. But, strangely, this is not the predominant view of the other noteworthy election that took place this week at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. The significant role of the military in the just-concluded Turkish election was remotely touched upon in the various analyses offered here.

In fact, Mona Yacoubian, a prominent independent consultant who is currently at the State Department, attributed the difference in perception to the belief that Turkey unlike Algeria, has done "a much better job" at handling in a constitutional manner the role of the military. This may be the case, but there are many others who were not comfortable with the way the Turkish generals, known for their sympathy toward Israel and cognisant of their partnership with NATO, dealt with the Islamists.

"Elections are not the only measure of a democracy," says Holly Carter, executive director of the Europe and Central Asia division of Human Rights Watch here. "Some of Turkey's laws seriously infringe upon the right to free expression that is guaranteed under international law and are a sign that democracy and respect for human rights have a long way to go in

Turkey." Arbitrary and senseless laws are seriously impeding on free expression in Turkey, a study released by Human Rights Watch on April 15 said. Journalists risk fines, imprisonment, or worse if they write about such subjects as the role of Islam in politics and society, Turkey's ethnic Kurdish minority, the conflict in south-eastern Turkey, or the proper role of the military in government and society.

In the days ahead, Algerian President-elect Abdelaziz Bouteflika will be needing more than his acknowledged charisma and eloquence, which have served to bring about an air of nostalgia in the country reminding some Algerians of the heady days under Houari Boumedienne when Bouteflika danced his hour upon the world stage as his country's flamboyant foreign minister.

As the other candidates, Bouteflika talked during the campaign about national reconciliation and dialogue. But he will probably need a magician's wand to rein in the jobless Algerian youth, who are said to number 70 per cent of the population, and, as he put it, "to definitely turn the sombre pages of our history to work for a new era." The abrupt decision of the six opposition candidates to pull out of the race on the eve of the election has dealt Bouteflika a hollow victory, especially as suspected he may not be able to carry on without the dictates of the squabbling generals.

The challenge to the regime by the so-called Group of Six, will be tested on April 26, the day they set for nationwide protests. More importantly, their action may decide whether the six opposition

leaders can maintain their coalition after their surprise decision on the eve of the polling.

Bouteflika should not count for long on the significant support of the moderate Islamist groups, who like the anti-establishment leaders can also stand up to the machinations of the army-led regime.

Nevertheless, the nay-saying, if properly channelled, may lend some credence to the authority of this second civilian president since the country won its national independence from the French in 1962: the first was Ahmed Ben Bella who was ousted in 1965. The opposition groups can serve as the "loyal" opposition and mark the beginning of the end of the rule of the generals from behind the scenes. There is no question that the country has had enough bloodshed — 75,000 were killed since 1992 — and is grasping for some fresh air.

Lacking a power base, Bouteflika has limited options by which he can gain legitimacy particularly if the 60 per cent turnout, as claimed by the government, proves fraudulent. His only road to salvation may be in instituting urgent economic reforms forthwith and unleashing some of the state enterprises.

In Turkey as in Algeria, the election has not categorically resolved the rifts within the country and has failed to provide the immediate stability that is so urgently needed at the two ends of the Mediterranean.

It may not be surprising if the two countries may once again seek another public referendum before settling on a firmer course.

Time for change in the media

Compiled by Mohammad Ben Hussein

Columnists last week commented on Prime Minister Abdur Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh's criticisms of the official media. They also discussed the current changes in the media.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Mohammad Subeili commenting on Rawabdeh's remarks, said the Prime Minister is entering a horse race riding a mule. Rawabdeh is mistaken if he thinks he can inject courage in Jordan's media by mocking it for not being bold enough to present the other side's point of view, said Subeili. Rawabdeh is mistaken on three points: First, boldness and initiatives are a gift from God and Rawabdeh cannot expect officials to suddenly have talents, said the writer.

Secondly, acting with courage which does not exist would kill the remaining credibility of the official media, which will be negatively reflected on the government's credibility, said Subeili. Third, the prime minister cannot blame the failure of official media on its financial state, because listening to others' opinions does not need more than self-confidence and a political decision to open the space for the other to express their opinions concerning causes of common interest, said Subeili.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Salameh Ne'mat said repeated governments, not the media leaderships, were terrified and powerless when faced with demands for reform and political openness. The old mentality in the official media leadership is still the same, except for one or two names, said Ne'mat. The government's latest move to change its media leaderships was dominated by these same old mentalities. How could a person who failed for 10 years be a success all of a sudden, asked the writer. The writer charged that the current changes in the media leaderships will not meet expectations, because the head of any particular media institution will not be able to make a significant change unless he is able to replace incompetent staff by professionals. And if

he cannot pay well qualified media experts as much as other Arab and foreign media institutions, he will only find failures who were unable to find themselves a place in these satellite channels, said Ne'mat. Most importantly, how could a head of a department identify a good writer from a bad if he himself cannot write a competent news item, said Ne'mat. Even if he can recognise the good from the bad, he will prefer not to recruit professionals out of fear for his office, added the writer.

Al Ra'i's Sultan Hatab said all official media problems can be solved only with a real political will to make the

required changes. The country has many qualified people, and many others have been forced to leave the country for lack of incentives. Hundreds of qualified Jordanians have been headhunted by Arab and international satellite stations who provided them the incentives that the government was unable to provide, said Hatab. Was it, asked Hatab, the intention of successive governments to weaken the media in order not to be criticised or share authority? The writer called on the prime minister to pursue his efforts in upgrading the local media performance and follow up his decision before it is shelved. He also urged Rawabdeh to protect the official media from the "too many hands," which interfere where they shouldn't. Different parties interfere in everything the official media broadcast starting with songs up to news bulletins, and this is the main reason for the media's current failure, charged Hatab.

Al Dustour's Ibrahim Ajlouni called on the government to be selective in recruiting people and not depend on personal preferences. He said the Kingdom has scores of well-qualified media experts but the government needs to provide them with the proper atmosphere and incentives, and security from any harm. The writer expressed hope that Rawabdeh's criticism of the official media would be the first step towards fundamental changes in the media.

mes, Saturday, April 24, 1999
success

Features

Old rifts reopen in Germany over Kosovo

By Douglas Busvine
Reuters

SHAPED LIKE the hands of a supplicant pleading for mercy, the ruins of Dresden's Frauenkirche (Our Lady) church, smashed by a devastating allied air raid in 1945, stood for decades as a symbol of the senselessness of war.

The 18th century baroque masterpiece is being rebuilt — again to embody a longing for peace and tolerance, as well as the coming together of east and west Germany into a reunited nation after the fall of the Berlin wall.

But, as the Frauenkirche takes shape, Germans again find themselves divided over NATO's bombing against Yugoslavia aimed at forcing President Slobodan Milosevic to end the killing and expulsion of majority Muslim ethnic Albanians from Kosovo.

History has turned full circle now that Germany's leaders have committed forces in the country's first offensive military action since World War II to combat the brand of "ethnic cleansing" perfected by Adolf Hitler's Nazi war machine.

And it is the people who suffered most from defeat in 1945 and the division and Communist repression which followed who most strongly oppose the campaign of aerial bombardment less than two hours flight away in Yugoslavia.

"The Kosovo war is not only an ethnic, but also a religious conflict. It is wrong to use weapons to fight a religious war," said 59-year-old Rudolf Quaiser, who works for the foundation raising funds to rebuild the Frauenkirche.

Out on the street in front of the church, most locals also oppose NATO's air campaign.

"We're afraid the war might come to us," said Wunhild Seidl, a 55-year-old laboratory worker. "I watch the news on television and sometimes I can't sleep at night." "I have great doubts over whether bombing Yugoslavia will achieve anything — although I must admit I can't think of a better solution," said Anja Ackermann, a 27-year-old theatre design student pushing her baby in a pram.

An elderly man, a naval veteran of World War II, said in contrast that there was no clear alternative to the air strikes.

But, he added: "the problem can't be solved with bombs alone."

Opinion polls show more than 60 per cent of East Germans oppose the NATO raids, while a similar proportion in the West backs the operations.

"It is a consequence of the long-term indoctrination, not just of East Germans but of Westerners too. The stereotypes are breaking out into the open," Manfred Guehlner, managing director of the Forsa Polling Institute, told Reuters.

Pollsters say support for the air strikes is volatile and fell after NATO admitted its bombs had killed civilian refugees.

But public backing for air strikes rises when television shows pictures of refugees who have fled Kosovo, telling harrowing stories of Yugoslav atrocities.

But Germans in both the East, where NATO was the enemy for nearly half a century, and the West are united in opposing any escalation of the alliance offensive to include the deployment of German ground troops to expel Yugoslav forces from Kosovo.

"Public opinion is stable: there is a clear rejection of the deployment of ground troops as part of any expansion of NATO's operations," said Richard Hilmer, managing director of the polling group Infratest Dimap.

That is forcing chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's government into a political high-wire act — by turns assuring NATO allies of Germany's military solidarity while doing all it can to broker a peace deal.

'I would like to know whether the Americans will really put on the pressure for ground troops... The Germans won't go along with that'

Veteran security expert Egon Bahr, a former foreign policy aide to Social Democrat chancellors Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt, said a crunch for the Bonn coalition could come if the United States does indeed call to send in ground troops.

"I would like to know whether the Americans will really put on the pressure for ground troops," he told Reuters. "The Germans won't go along with that."

"It requires the support of parliament, and there is no party in parliament which would back sending in ground troops." Since the crisis escalated a month ago, Schroeder's personal popularity, and that of his Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, has soared.

Schroeder, in particular, has managed to cast off the image of a slick but superficial "cashmere chancellor" and assume a more serious, statesmanlike role, pollsters say.

The picture is more mixed, however, for the two parties they lead. While the electoral research group puts Schroeder's Social Democrats level with the opposition Christian Democrats at 41 per cent, another poll by Infratest Dimap puts the SPD on 35 per cent — far behind the CDU's 43 per cent.

Surveys put the Greens on between five and six per cent — barely above the threshold needed to win election to parliament.

That could be bad news for the governing parties if the Kosovo crisis drags on for weeks, or even months, with a series of regional state polls looming during the course of this year.

Four of the six state elections are in the east, in Brandenburg, Thuringia and Saxony — whose capital is Dresden — as well as the capital of the newly-proclaimed "Berlin Republic" proclaimed by Schroeder in the renovated Reichstag last Monday.

A poor run of results would dash Schroeder's hopes of winning back control of parliament's upper house which he lost following a rout in Hesse earlier this year.

The Greens, which grew out of the cold war peace movement to enter national government for the first time last year, are also at odds over the Kosovo crisis.

Fischer abandoned his strict pacifist stance following the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, in the closing stages of the Bosnian war, and has managed to carry the support of most Greens deputies for Germany's participation in the NATO air strikes.

But several leading Greens — among them junior environment minister Gila Altmann — have since called for an immediate end to the NATO action. The Greens face more wrenching debate in the run-up to a party conference on May 13.

Analysts say they cannot rule out a collapse in Schroeder's six-month-old coalition as a result of the Greens in-fighting.

But, for now at least, Fischer seems to be able to appeal over the heads of his party colleagues to command the support of voters. He issued a direct appeal on Wednesday, warning in a front-page newspaper interview of a threat to the coalition.

"He has unbelievable support among Greens voters. That is hugely important for his standing," Hilmer said.

"But there will continue to be conflicts among the Greens — that is the great danger

Turkish women torn on headscarf politics

By Elif Unal
Reuters

SUNA AND Gulen are both married women with children, former teachers with the same gentle but confident manner. The suspicion dividing them cuts like a knife through Turkish society.

Gulden Celik wears a headscarf, an elegant, colourful, silk scarf fastened at the chin by a pin to hide her hair and forehead.

On the streets of any Western city this might go unremarked, but in Turkey the scarf can be a potent statement, not only of Muslim faith but also of commitment to another, alien order.

"Women in headscarves look to me ugly and strange, like penguins," says 56-year-old Suna Demirkaya. "If they don't like our system they should go to Iran. I'd pay for their ticket." Suna wears her scarf draped fashionably around her neck, her hair is dyed blonde, make-up applied with subtlety. Gulen eschews makeup as immodest and wears a long, loose coat to envelop her body. Suna chooses a smart knee-length skirt.

Now retired, Suna is alarmed by what she sees as the inroads of Islam into everyday life and politics.

She cherishes an image of a "mod-

'I was a very keen teacher, but I had to leave the school because I was forbidden to wear my headscarf'

ern" Turkey leaving behind all symbols of the theocratic Ottoman order abolished 75 years ago by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the secularist founder of the Republic of Turkey. She fears, like others, the advent of a new order, perhaps even a Sharia law regime, that will rob her of Western freedoms and independence.

Gulden, 48, who campaigned for victory for the Islamist Virtue Party at elections last week, seems to her to embody that threat.

For her part, Gulen sees herself as

victim of a "senseless" secularist campaign of persecution that forces her kind from educational and other state bodies. Under the constitution religion and religious symbols are barred from public life.

Gulden, now head of the Virtue Women's Branch, was forced to leave teaching during a previous campaign against headscarves.

"I was a very keen teacher, but I had to leave the school because I was forbidden to wear my headscarf... But I have never really stopped working. Along with my husband, I tell people of our holy religion. At the same time, I've learnt Arabic." Gulen would be hard put to convince secularist authorities that her silk scarf has no political meaning.

"Why do people fear us so? Have we carried out any terrorist attacks, have we tried to change the system? If we cover ourselves, the main reason is that the Koran orders that practice and we obey... Of course as women you want to look beautiful and the scarves really suit us."

Suna, sipping a fruit juice, sees no reason to trust Gulen and her kind. There is too much at stake. She takes solace, however, in the vigilance of the secularist army.

"The duty of the Turkish armed forces is to protect this republic," she

says. "The army is the only one that takes this very, very seriously. I don't see any politicians defending the republic. They're just after votes." Less than two years ago the army used its considerable influence to edge Turkey's first Islamist government from power.

The Islamist Welfare Party, which had campaigned on promises of a new Islamist economic order and pursued close ties with radical Arab states such as Libya, was later banned and Virtue, biggest grouping in the old parliament, emerged in its place.

Prosecutors are pushing to ban Virtue, which campaigns now as a mass party drawing strong support from the poor, on allegations that it seeks an Islamic state on Turkish soil.

Gulden hints at hopes that Virtue leaders would never express publicly; that the 20 per cent Islamist support at 1995 elections will find its echo in the ranks of the conscript army.

The generals might then be forced to review their attitudes to Virtue. With this could come a second taste of power.

"We assess the military as the home of the Prophet Muhammad," says Gulen. The general staff, however, is vigorous in purging all proselytisers from the barracks and has made it clear it would not brook a virtue gov-

'Women in headscarves look to me ugly and strange, like penguins'

ernment.

Gulden and Suna acknowledge common ground in their lives.

Both indeed are Muslims, both want a united Turkey free of violence on the streets and in the home. Both were married in religious ceremonies, come from "modern" secularist families and are strongly influenced by their spouses.

"My husband and I share political views," says Suna.

"If I'd married someone else, I might have been in another position"

says Gulen. "My views might have been quite different."

Headscarves could explode into a constitutional issue in the new parliament meets, as Virtue is for the first time returning young women who cover their heads.

Virtue, whose sober programme contrasts sharply with the Islamist rhetoric of old Welfare, is fully aware their arrival to take the parliamentary oath in a headscarf will be seen by many as violating the secularist spirit of the constitution.

Arguments that the scarf is a private, not political matter may cut no ice here.

The truth is, the scarf in Turkey is what the wearer wants it to be. For the few who wear it on the streets of central Istanbul it may be only a convenience or even a fashion accessory, for others a display of piety.

For some, undoubtedly, this piety provides a rare and welcome opportunity for open public defiance of a constitutionally guaranteed secularist order. It is political.

The secularist state obliges in this joust by banning the scarf and its wearer at every turn. Sanction headscarves, runs the argument, and Ataturk's republic may drown in a creeping tide of religious bigotry within a generation.

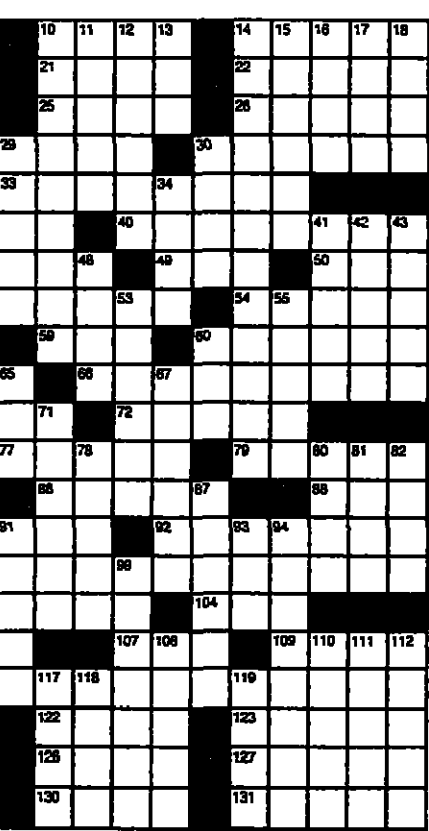
The Saturday Crossword

NFL CONTENTERS

By Alan P. Olschwang, Huntington Beach, California

- ACROSS**
- 1 Pacific Island group
 - 6 Swedish singers
 - 10 Diversity
 - 14 Trade association
 - 19 Higher
 - 20 Historic times
 - 21 Sheltanward
 - 22 Pakistan's neighbor
 - 23 "Rebel without a Cause" co-star
 - 24 Ans.
 - 25 Turner of "Peyton Place"
 - 26 Rectify
 - 27 Topping containing shallots
 - 30 Moves quietly
 - 31 Heliper, abbr.
 - 32 Peace cheese
 - 33 Pay close attention
 - 35 Paddle
 - 37 Separated
 - 40 Longest or shortest day
 - 44 NASA's Laboratory
 - 49 Ruby of "Peyton Place"
 - 50 Newsman Rather
 - 51 Type of general
 - 52 Give thumbs up
 - 54 Pursuit
 - 56 Asen.
 - 57 Tooth: pref.
 - 59 Lanka
 - 60 Parish clergyman
 - 61 Dream, Lohengrin aria
 - 64 Travels by glider
 - 66 Sacker
 - 68 Military trainee
 - 70 Ordinal ending
 - 72 "A Generation of Vipers" writer
 - 73 Nationalistic
 - 77 Second crop of hay in one season
 - 79 Choir section
 - 83 Delon and Prost
 - 84 Table projector
 - 86 House of
 - 88 Pindar poem
 - 89 George of "Cheers"
 - 90 "Butterfield 8" co-star
 - 92 Disinclination to act
 - 98 Drag something heavy
 - 99 Youth org.

- DOWN**
- 1 Brazilian dance in dupe time
 - 2 Irish Rose
 - 3 Van Dryn and Washbourne
 - 4 Outdoos
 - 5 Semi-eternity?
 - 6 Eagle's nest
 - 7 City on the Oder
 - 8 First, second, or third, e.g.
 - 9 Small vipers
 - 10 Appraisers
 - 11 Intersection of regret
 - 12 Taylor and Adoree
 - 13 Affirmative vote
 - 14 Big redwood
 - 15 Not proper
 - 16 Cartoon light bulb
 - 17 Connection
 - 18 Fathers
 - 20 Overseas
 - 29 Anchor position
 - 30 One-and-only
 - 34 Focal point
 - 36 Knack
 - 38 Rio de la
 - 39 Sack
 - 41 Just right
 - 42 Social class
 - 43 John In
 - 44 San CA
 - 45 Chemical compound
 - 46 Gunshots
 - 47 Lock in the dials
 - 48 North of Paris?
 - 53 Observer
 - 55 One of the archangels
 - 58 Wink of an eye
 - 60 U.S. Army rank
 - 62 Bitterly pungent
 - 63 Swiss dog
 - 65 Ocean passage: abbr.
 - 67 Business agent
 - 68 Spanish cuisine?
 - 71 Stage of the LPGA
 - 73 Ratchet latches
 - 74 Native Alaskan
 - 75 "Last in Paris"
 - 76 John Dickson or Vikki
 - 78 "The Right Stuff" writer
 - 80 Oz dog
 - 81 Chief Norse god
 - 82 Yellow and Black
 - 85 Female Benedict Arnold
 - 87 Like detachable parts
 - 90 Sages
 - 91 Fix firmly in: var.
 - 93 Greek vowel
 - 94 City on the James River
 - 97 "Smooth Operator" singer
 - 99 More irrational
 - 101 Capital of New Caledonia
 - 102 Curtain call
 - 106 Home-run king
 - 108 By oneself
 - 110 Dwelling
 - 111 Stacken
 - 112 Lover's get-together
 - 113 Lahn handle
 - 114 2,000-pound weights
 - 115 Very French
 - 117 Pension \$\$
 - 118 "Nautilus" captain
 - 119 VOA group
 - 121 Went first



Last Sunday's Crossword Solved

WORD: ARRIE WHOOP HASE
ARON EAPLE ADGEE ELAL
PLANEMARBLE ROTER RITE
ADOLEA VEERED ATACKED
ANDY AMEROS GUBBS
BEANBEE PATRIAS RAL
BENAVOMORRE DANESBIT
ROM ATTENS ZANEPAGE
GLAM DEN EDIVS COOE
BANDALO CHARD BRUASIS
ADIN SOARS SEER
ASKMAN YEARN CARPORTS
LOUD EPOCH PAL STORK
FUDANCHU SPARES BAY
ADPACHA PHILLIP MARORE
ANT OUTRARS REASTY
SABLE BOOBAZ PEAR
CLOSTER CAYPTO LIARS
HARE BATHU PERAYWASON
AUES BADEP UMITE TWAL
POSH TERMS SHOOD BENT

NOTICE OF SALE

Period of sale: Inspection and bidding should be from: Monday 26th until Thursday 29th April, 1999 From 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Location: SIEMENS AG - JORDAN BRANCH'S warehouse in Yadoudah area

Item to be sold:

- 1- SKODA COMBI GLX station wagon vehicle 1300cc engine with air-condition, AM/FM radio cassette and central lock. Model 1997
- 2- KIA CONCORD GTX 2000cc engine with power steering, power windows, air-condition, central lock and power antenna. Model 1994.
- 3- HYUNDAI VAN 2500cc engine, 6 seater, with AM/FM radio cassette. Model 1997
- 4- KIA SEPIA SLX 1500cc engine with air-condition, AM/FM radio. Model 1996
- 5- THREE STAR PICK UP 3300cc engine, five-speed. Overall dimension: L5280mm W2040 H2100, wheelbase 2800mm. Cargo deck inside: L3995mm W1860 H400. Model SXZ10413. Year of make 1996 Quantity: Three pick ups

Conditions of sale:

- Sale is conducted by sealed bid.
- All property is sold on as-is, where is, non-returnable basis for cash payment without refund or warranty.
- Bid forms will be available at location of sale.
- All items will be available for inspection at location of sale.
- Sale will be to the highest bid and in JD cash only. A refundable deposit of 10% of the total bid is required at time of bid in cash JD only. All bids must be deposited in lock box by 12:00 p.m. Thursday 29th April, 1999.
- All property must be paid for and removed by successful bidder Monday 3rd May, 1999.
- If not removed by successful bidder on May 3rd, 1999 a storage fee of JD50.00 per day for each item will be imposed.

For further information please contact
Mr. Abdel Al-Rahman Nasser at telephone No. 5621303

SAMAR HOTEL
Ma'daba Street
Al Yadouda Customs Bonded **SIEMENS STORE** **To Ma'daba**
Airport Road

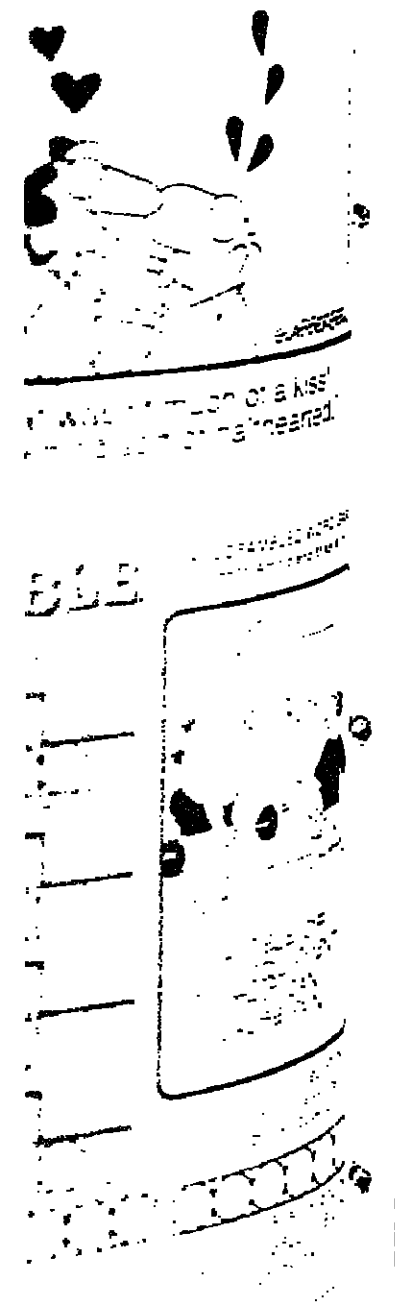
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ACCESS 4648888

DATE	TIME	PRICE	CHANGE
ARAB BK	205.000	207.000	+0.98%
NYT BK	1.330	1.320	-0.75%
THE HOUSING BK	2.640	2.640	0.00%
JO KUWAIT BK	1.810	1.810	0.00%
JO. INTL. TRADING	0.840	0.840	0.00%
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1.570	1.560	-0.64%
UNION BK	1.000	1.000	0.00%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.540	0.540	0.00%

ACCESS 4648888

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ARAB BK	205.000	207.000	+0.98%
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JO KUWAIT BK	1.810	1.810	0.00%
JO. INTL. TRADING	0.840	0.840	0.00%
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1.570	1.560	-0.64%
UNION BK	1.000	1.000	0.00%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.540	0.540	0.00%



Business & Finance

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Jordan Dead Sea Industries Company posts a JD138,800 net profit in 1998

THE JORDAN Dead Sea Industries Company, which has many stakes in other mineral firms in the Kingdom, posted a JD174,500 operational loss last year as production costs totalled JD2.9 million while sales amounted to JD2.8 million. The loss was recorded despite a 128 per cent increase in sales and a 35 per cent rise in costs.

When taking into consideration other expenditures and other income which totalled JD3.2 million and JD2.8 million respectively, the company's net loss reached JD605,400. But when the minority interest share of the net loss was taken into account, the net result of the company at the end of 1998 was a JD138,800 net profit.

The financial statement of the company showed total assets at JD52.4 million, about 40 per cent higher than the JD37.5 million registered at the end of 1997. Most of the increase was in inventory, receivables and cash at banks. Total liabilities amounted to JD22.3 million at the end of last year compared to JD18 million at the end of 1997. The nearly 24 per cent increase was mainly in bank credits, long-term payables and minority interests and rights. The shareholders equity was higher by 55 per cent at JD30.1 million (JD19.4 million in 1997) as a result of a rise in the paid-up capital.

The company was a holding firm until Nov. 21, 1998 when share-

holders voted to transform it into a limited public shareholding company during an extraordinary general assembly meeting. "By changing the legal form, the company became able to invest 40 per cent in the capital of the Jordan Bromine Company which will be producing bromine and its by-products as well as chlorine and potassium hydroxide," Board Chairman Awni Al Masri told the shareholders.

Al Masri said the company has achieved great progress in establishing industrial companies to extract and utilise Dead Sea minerals. He indicated that the Jordan Dead Sea Industries Company (JODICO) has a total equity of JD41 million in the capital of various firms in which the expected investments of these projects amount to JD300 million.

The company's JD41 million of equity in other firms represents 68 per cent of JODICO's capital. Masri said noting that the subsidiaries and affiliated firms are the Jordan Safi Salt Company, the Jordan Magnesia Company and the Jordan Bromine Company.

"Efforts continue to conduct the necessary studies to specify the projects that have technical feasibility in order to establish companies for carrying out other schemes," Masri concluded (Al Dustour + Al Arab Al Yawm + Al Aswaa).

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You could pay out quite a bit of money today without realising what you're doing. Don't spontaneously buy whatever you want, or fall under the spell of a smooth-talking salesperson. You may not be the best judge of what's a good deal, so don't go shopping in an unfamiliar market today. — Not all by yourself, anyway.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You're likely to clash with at least one other person today, in a friendly way, hopefully. You have strong opinions, but so does the other person. A compromise is possible, especially if you're working on a project together. It's certainly advisable, too. The final outcome looks positive, but it may take a mediator to get you both to agree. Go along with that programme.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Your closest friends and neighbours are your greatest asset now. If you're in a situation that you don't quite understand, go to them for advice. Could be something that you've just never had to deal with before. It looks like an older woman who lives nearby can explain the whole thing in a minute and put your mind to rest. Confide what you're worried about to a friend.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) Money is on your mind again today, and possibly your project is buying or selling. If you're like most Cancer people, you're a natural businessperson. You're a wheeler-dealer extraordinaire, and you always play to win. That's why your family is so well provided for. You watch for the best deals, and when you spot one, you grab it. Today, make that your objective.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You don't have everyone's approval yet. Well, don't give up. All you need to do to clinch the argument is to prove that your way is going to be cost-effective. That's what the others are really worried about. Will they be able to afford this fabulous scheme of yours? If you can convince them they'll make money on the deal, you've got it made.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Today you're being pushed to put up or shut up. You're usually a meek, quiet person in many ways. You don't generally brag a lot, but you might have been talking up your dreams, letting other people know what you'd like to make happen. And now, they're saying "OK, well, go ahead and do it." So, it looks like you're going to have to go ahead and do it!

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Today could be disappointing at first. It looks like something you want for your home won't be affordable. This might apply to several things you wanted for your home, but don't despair. Let this situation motivate you, instead. There might be a way you can make what you want, and have it turn out even better. Give it some thought.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Take care of business this morning. There are still a few decisions to be made, and a few things that have to be put in place before you can fully relax. You'll know when that happens, because it will feel like a weight has been lifted. All of a sudden, things will start getting easy, and sure enough, you'll be on the downhill side of the ride.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) It won't be hard to have a rollicking good time today. In fact, it'll be hard not to. Just make sure you've taken all the safety precautions. If you're riding a bike, wear a helmet. If you're on a boat, wear a lifejacket. The stakes are pretty high, so you can't afford to take any chances. This is not a good day to go on the high wire without a safety net.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) If you're buying something big, take care. Read all the fine print and get an expert to review it, too. Once the serious stuff is handled, conditions look good for travel, it's probably been a while since you went somewhere just for the fun of it. Well, you definitely have permission to do that now.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You may feel like your freedom has been restricted. You have to take everybody else into consideration, and that slows things down considerably. Try not to get frustrated. It's going to work out for the best, but there are a lot of different people to consult and factors to consider. It's wiser to move slowly and do it right the first time.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You and your partner need to have a conversation today about practical matters. Discuss your plans for the future. What would you like to build? Where do you want to go? What will your life like in 20 years? If you don't already have a partner, getting clear on these issues will sure help you know which one to choose.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

Government panel to meet with Fastlink team to consider proper pricing structure

By Ghadeer Taher

AMMAN — A newly-formed government panel will meet with Fastlink representatives in the next several weeks to negotiate a reduction of tariffs levelled on mobile calls, a senior official said on Friday.

"We are looking into a proper pricing structure," said the official, referring to charges levied by the gov-

ernment on Fastlink. "JTC (Jordan Telecommunications Corporation) mobile phone service cannot operate at a different cost level than Fastlink."

The state-owned JTC has plans to launch the second Global Systems for Mobile (GSM) by the end of this year.

"The direction is to reduce tariffs in order to allow Fastlink to charge the

customer lower prices," he added.

Jordan Mobile Telephone Service (Fastlink), the country's sole mobile service provider, has insisted that the second operator be subjected to similar conditions.

During the last year, the two sides have had on-and-off discussions on a possible reduction in interconnect fees, 60 fils at peak time and 40 fils off peak, and an increase in frequency allocations. These rates are considered among the highest in the world.

Fastlink also has a 20 per cent revenue sharing agreement with the government.

When Fastlink won the tender in 1994, it paid JD7 million for the licence. JD14.8 million to scrap the now defunct car telephone system and undertook to pay an additional JD27.4

million in total guaranteed payment to the government over a four-year operational period.

In February, five international companies submitted bids to supply and set up the second mobile phone network in the country. The bids are still in the technical evaluation stage. After that, they will be financially evaluated. Telecommunications Minister Jamal Sarairoh said at a press conference last week that he expects the JTC, the operator, to be ready to offer the mobile phone service by the end of this year and that the GSM division would require JD54 million in investment over a three-year period.

Fastlink, which has 75,000 subscribers, had filed a breach of contract lawsuit against the government in December of 1997. Fastlink said the govern-

ment violated its agreement with the firm when it decided to grant a second licence to the JTC without an open tender process.

But after one year of deliberations the Higher Court of Justice decided it had no jurisdiction to rule on the case.

Yusuf Mansur, the newly-appointed head of the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission who replaced Yusuf Abu Jamous, will head the panel which includes the finance ministry's secretary general, the director of the Investment Promotion Corporation, the JTC's vice president of financial affairs and Afram Jamil and Mohammed Khasawneh as two consultants from the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications.

Prices of shares improve at ASE

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — The Amman Stock Exchange's (ASE's) share prices recorded a tangible increase during last week's activities following the improvement in the Arab Bank's share price, the bourse's leading blue-chip, brokers said Friday.

The ASE's weekly bulletin showed the Arab Bank share price rising to JD207 in the past week compared to JD200.5 in the previous week.

"It is a well-known fact that if the Arab Bank's share price increases it will reflect positively on the market and that is exactly what happened last week," a broker, who asked not to be named, said.

"The bank's share price was attractive to investors and that lured them to buy more shares resulting in the improvement of its price in general," another broker said.

The bulletin indicated that general price index closed at 174.23 points compared to 172.5 points a week ago, a rise of 1.73 points.

The weekly turnover amounted to JD10.3 million compared to JD3.7 million in the previous week.

By recording JD6.3 million of trading, the Jordan Cement Factories Company ranked first among the shares of 66 firms that were traded in the past week.

On Wednesday, foreign investors sold 1.5 million shares of the cement company in a deal, which

amounted to JD6.2 million.

The deal followed the company's general assembly meeting, where the firm's 1998 report indicated that its net profit declined to JD7.9 million, or 25.7 per cent down compared to 1997 figures.

The Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company ranked second in this sector with a turnover amounting to JD408,364.

The industrial sector's total turnover amounted to JD7.9 million followed by the banking sector, JD1.6 million, and the services sector with JD 813,409.

The Arab Bank, the Kingdom's largest financial institution, won JD971,416 during last week trading.

The banking sector price index closed at 269.3 points compared to 267.11 points a week ago.

Shares of 66 firms were traded on the floor in the past week, where shares of 24 firms recorded increase in their prices, 29 registered decrease and 13 firms witnessed no changes in their prices.

The parallel market's turnover amounted to JD886,276, where trading focused on Zira for Investments and Mideast Pharmaceuticals, the weekly bulletin showed.

Iran eyes bonds to fund petrochemicals

TEHRAN (R) — Iran's top petrochemicals official has said the country would tap international bond markets to help finance petrochemical projects, which would require \$7.2 billion in investments.

"We will look to the bond market as one way of financing petrochemical projects," Deputy Oil Minister Mohammad Reza Nematzadeh told Reuters in an interview.

Nematzadeh, who also heads the National Petrochemical Company (NPC), said the firm would also turn to joint ventures and others schemes to fund the projects, part of Iran's ambition to triple its annual petrochemical output to 30 million tonnes in 25 years with a \$24 billion development programme.

Nematzadeh, one of several Iranian officials who called on international companies to invest in the country's petrochemical industry, said no decision had been made yet on how much financing Iran would seek from bond markets.

"We are still studying the situation. We expect to make a decision in six months. Bonds will be one way we will seek financing. We also want joint ventures," he said.

"We expect to get the funding (for the projects) in three years," Nematzadeh added.

Bahraini firms to kick-start trade with Iraq

MANAMA (AFP) — As many as 12 Bahraini firms are to undertake a trade mission to Iraq in May to tout for business after more than eight years of sanctions, a newspaper said on Thursday.

The visit, organised by the Gulf emirate's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, was due to leave on May 25 and focus on the food, medical equipment and pharmaceutical sectors, the Gulf Daily News said.

The contracts would come under the U.N. oil-for-food programme that allows Baghdad to sell limited quantities of crude in return for food, medicine and other essential goods.

Baghdad has a charge d'affaires in Manama, although the Bahraini embassy in Iraq has been closed since the 1991 Gulf War which evicted Iraq from Kuwait.

A.S.E TRADE Thursday, 22-04-99

ACCESS 4648888

Company	Open	Close	Change
BANKS			
ARAB BK	205.000	207.000	+0.98%
NYT BK	1.330	1.320	-0.75%
THE HOUSING BK	2.640	2.640	0.00%
JO KUWAIT BK	1.810	1.810	0.00%
JO. INTL. TRADING	0.840	0.840	0.00%
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1.570	1.560	-0.64%
UNION BK	1.000	1.000	0.00%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.540	0.540	0.00%
BANKS INDEX			
288.410 POINT = +0.77%			
INSURANCE			
AHLIA INS	1.050	1.050	0.00%
INSURANCE INDEX			
121.710 POINT = 0.00%			
SERVICES			
ELECTRIC POWER	1.870	1.870	0.00%
HOTEL ETOURISM	3.580	3.580	0.00%
ARAB INTL. HOTELS	4.740	4.740	0.00%
SHIPPING LINES	0.950	1.000	+5.26%
PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	0.850	0.820	-3.53%
JO. INTL. TRADING	0.840	0.840	0.00%
ARAB INTL. FOR INVS & EDU	1.560	1.740	+11.54%
UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1.100	1.100	0.00%
SERVICES INDEX			
109.830 POINT = +0.53%			
INDUSTRY			
CEMENT	3.700	3.510	-5.14%
ARAB POTASH	4.250	4.250	0.00%
PETROLEUM REFINERY	10.780	10.850	+0.65%
THE IND. COM. & AGRIC	1.020	1.020	0.00%
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL	2.890	2.900	+0.35%
CERAMIC IND	1.260	1.320	+4.76%
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1.330	1.340	+0.75%
NYT STEEL	0.780	0.860	+10.26%
MIDDLE EAST COMPLEX	0.640	0.640	0.00%
JO. STEEL	1.000	0.990	-1.00%
ARAB ALUMINIUM	1.830	1.830	0.00%
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0.370	0.370	0.00%
FAVIER	0.820	0.820	0.00%
INTL. IND	0.330	0.330	0.00%
PETRO - CHEMICAL	0.190	0.190	0.00%
CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL	1.130	1.140	+0.88%
ROCKWELL	0.240	0.250	+4.17%
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL	0.960	1.010	+5.21%
NYT CABLE	0.600	0.490	-18.33%
SULPHO - CHEMICALS	0.380	0.370	-2.63%
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM	0.470	0.480	+2.13%
AL-BEIR	0.570	0.580	+1.75%
EL-ZAY	1.150	1.150	0.00%
UNIVERSAL MODERN IND	0.670	0.670	0.00%
IND. RESOURCES	0.620	0.620	0.00%
NEW CARLES	0.800	0.800	0.00%
NYT ALUMINIUM	0.720	0.720	0.00%
INDUSTRY INDEX			
95.300 POINT = -1.09%			
PARALLEL			
JO. TRADING FACILITIES	0.480	0.470	-2.17%
JO. INTL. INS	0.880	1.000	+13.64%
UNION INVS. CORP	0.800	0.790	-1.25%
ARAB FINANCIAL INVS	0.470	0.480	+2.13%
FAVIER	0.780	0.780	0.00%
ADVANCED PHAR	0.510	0.510	0.00%
FALCON	1.090	1.090	0.00%
MEDICAL APPLIANCES	0.360	0.370	+2.78%
AL-DAR	0.800	0.810	+1.25%
ARAB INVESTORS	1.000	0.960	-4.00%
OPTICAL & AUDIO	0.330	0.330	0.00%
NAMCO	0.190	0.190	0.00%
MIDDLE EAST PHAR	0.510	0.520	+1.96%
AL-RAY	0.570	0.580	+1.75%
UNITED ENG. IND	0.200	0.200	0.00%
NYT CERAMIC	0.380	0.380	0.00%
NYT POULTRY	0.850	0.850	0.00%
ZARA	1.600	1.600	0.00%
GRAND INDEX			
174.24 POINT = +0.24%			

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Lazio and Mallorca to bring down curtain on Cup Winners Cup

PARIS (AFP) — The 39th — and last — Cup Winners Cup final will see Italian title-chasers Lazio take on Euro novices Real Mallorca after the Spaniards ended Chelsea's dream of becoming the only club ever to retain the trophy.

Chelsea, who ousted Germany's Stuttgart in last season's final, had happy memories of an earlier Spanish encounter having beaten Real Madrid to lift the trophy for the first time back in 1971.

But they had no answer to the athleticism and miserly defending of Mallorca, who having achieved a fine 1-1 draw at Stamford Bridge a fortnight ago, drew first blood on 15 minutes with a fine header by Argentine striker Leonardo Biagini following fine work by Jovan Stankovic.

The goal was enough to secure a deserved 2-1 win on aggregate.

Despite their incomparably greater riches, Chelsea were decidedly playing second fiddle and they paid for their lethargy, amply illustrated by Dennis Wise's misdirected header right at the death which would have forced extra-time.

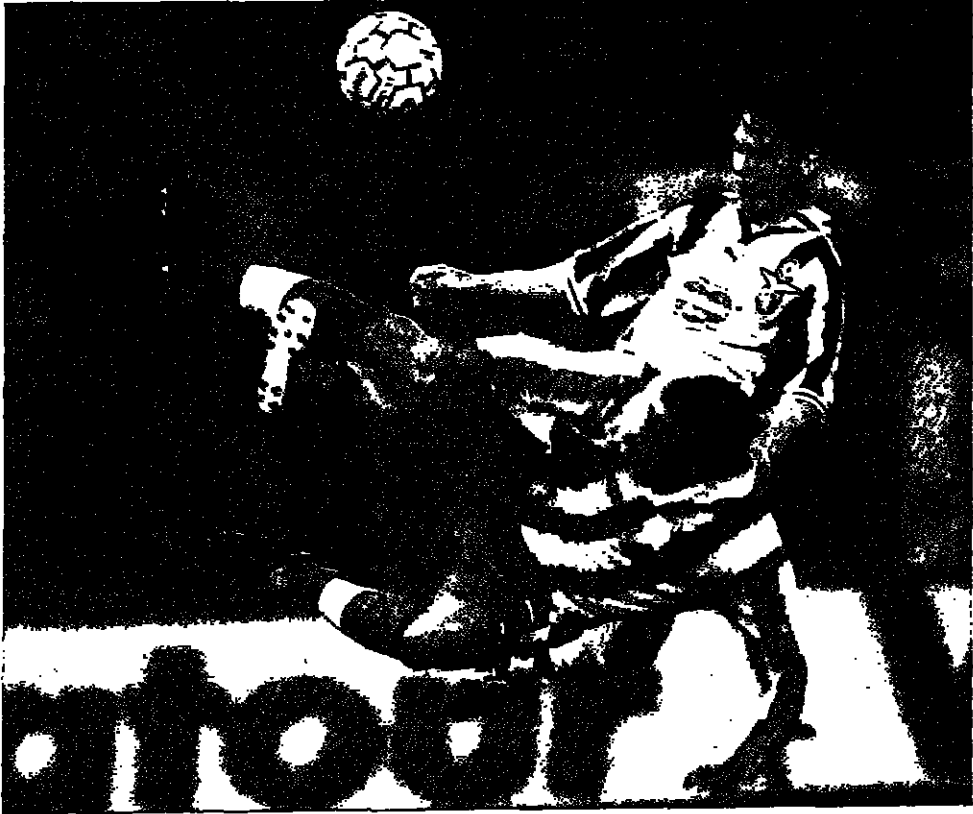
Lazio meanwhile ground out a dour goalless draw with Russia's Lokomotiv Moscow to advance on the away goals rule courtesy of the 1-1 draw they secured in the away leg.

The Italians were soundly beaten by Inter Milan in last year's UEFA Cup final and now will hope to go one better by lifting their first ever European trophy.

Faced by a vociferous crowd in Palma, Chelsea had tried a little kidology before the game with Mallorca by demanding the Spanish cut their favoured long grass which suits their athletic style.

But it was the English Premiership side which found itself cut down to size as Mallorca, playing in their first ever European campaign, looked far more the Euro aristocrats than their millionaire opponents at the modest Luis Sitjar Stadium which the Spaniards will leave at the end of the season.

Chelsea player-boss Gianluca Vialli's decision to leave himself out of the starting line-up for only the second time in Europe this season backfired as fellow Italian Gianfranco Zola and Norwegian Tore Andre Flo



Chelsea's Uruguayan Gustavo Poyet (R) and Argentinian Leo Biagini (L) who scored Real Mallorca's goal, fall down during their second leg Cup Winners' Cup semi final match at Luis Sitjar stadium. Mallorca reached the final against Lazio Rome after winning today 1-0 (AFP photo)



Lazio Rome's Czech player Pavel Nevdev (R) fights for the ball with Lokomotiv Moscow's player Sherevchenko (L) during their second round Cup Winners' Cup semi-final match in Rome (AFP photo)

failed to spark. In fact Vialli was not even among the substitutes as his side tried in vain to break down an armour-plated Spanish defence, the most miserly in the Spanish first division.

The tie was nicely poised following the 1-1 draw in the first leg at Stamford Bridge two weeks ago.

Immediately after Biagini's goal, Chelsea almost got back on terms with Graeme Le Saux crossing from the left and Uruguayan striker Gustavo Poyet turning his marker to hook narrowly over the bar.

Flo and Zola then both

sent efforts narrowly off target but Chelsea somehow could not raise the required momentum to inflict sustained pressure.

They forced the first corner after only four minutes when Zola's swirling cross glanced off the head of defender Marcelino but when the flag kick came over Dennis Wise's chip shot was comfortably handled by goalkeeper Carlos Roa.

Roa in particular should savour the final against Lazio as he belongs to a religious sect which believes that the world will end in 2001. For the Cup Winners Cup, the end is

already nigh.

Another Italian — Roberto Di Matteo — also hit the bar for the Londoners.

Chelsea had dreamed of joining Manchester United as a second English team to reach a major European final this season — a feat matched by Everton and Liverpool in 1985.

Lazio will have to show more of the killer instinct which has propelled them to the top of the Serie A if they are to see off Mallorca in the May 19 final that they displayed on Tuesday in Rome against Lokomotiv.

A win in the final in Birmingham on May 19 will see the Italians take their country's tally of wins in the competition to seven — level with Spain, four of whose wins were achieved by Barcelona.

Lazio huffed and puffed against Lokomotiv and were grateful in the end for their away goal in Moscow after missing a series of chances — mainly through Italy's World Cup striker Christian Vieri.

The home fans showed their disapproval by loudly whistling their team.

Vieri signalled his presence after barely two minutes, latching onto a through pass from Roberto Mancini and powering in a shot which goalkeeper Ruslan Nigmatullin willingly turned round for a corner.

A better chance fell four minutes later to the visitors' Dmitri Bouykin when he waltzed past two Lazio defenders and rifled a low shot past Luca Marchegiani which flashed just wide of the far post.

And it proved to be the first of several incursions by the skilful ball-playing Russians, who were able to cut swathes through the Lazio defence with a combination of elegant dribbling and deft one-touch football.

Lazio finally found their usual rhythm midway through the half and Vieri, who had just been denied a far-post header, should have scored in the 27th minute.

Mancini sent in a powerful cross, Vieri got his boot in before his marker's but could only guide the ball over the bar from point-blank range with the goalkeeper hopelessly beaten.

Yugoslav Sinisa Mihajlovic came even closer two minutes later, managing the rare feat of crashing the ball against the crossbar with an viciously inswinging corner kick, which Fernando Couto then failed to prod home.

Vieri should have been clean through in the 37th minute, but was badly let down by his first touch of Mancini's defence-splitting pass.

And Lokomotiv striker Zaza Dzhanashvili could have done better with a free shot from 10 metres which he hooked across the face of the goal, as the lack of finishing marked both sides' performances.

Tennis in billion dollar marketing deal

MONTE CARLO (AFP) — The ATP Tour wrapped up nine months of negotiations and planning Friday, signing an \$1.2 billion marketing agreement Friday for its elite sphere of tournaments which will last for a decade.

The Tour granted the Swiss-based sports marketing firm ISL Worldwide an exclusive marketing, broadcast and licensing rights deal for the Super 9 series plus the Tour's annual November World Championships.

The signing ceremony was held at the Monte Carlo Country club as the Super 9 Monte Carlo Open reached the quarter-final stage.

ISL will sell television rights for the 10

events plus handle television marketing for all of the 50 plus other events on the Tour. The agreement, first proposed last summer during Wimbledon, takes effect on Jan. 1, when the entire structure of men's tennis will change. From that date, computer rankings will be a straight-sum numbers game starting in January and ending in November, replacing the current rolling, 52-week ranking period.

The tournament calendar will also be streamlined and revised and all eligible players will be required to compete — unless injured — in the four Grand Slams plus the Super 9s.

Blatter dashes Nigeria's World Cup 2006 hopes

LAGOS (AFP) — Nigeria's hopes of hosting the 2006 World Cup were seriously undermined by FIFA President Sepp Blatter here on Friday.

Blatter, here to watch the World Youth championship final on Saturday, said the African state still had a long way to go before it would be ready to host the world's biggest sporting event.

FIFA officials said Blatter, who has regularly expressed support for an African country hosting the 2006 event, accepted that Nigeria had still a long way to go in building the hotels and setting up transport facilities needed for the senior event.

"The World Youth Championship has worked, but there is a quantum leap between that and the World Cup," said a senior FIFA official Friday.

The official cited the shortage of hotel beds, poor communications facilities and transport problems in Nigeria.

With the final decision over who hosts the 2006 World Cup being made early next year, Nigeria has little time to get things sorted out.

England, Germany, Brazil, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Morocco and Egypt are all bidding for the 2006 World Cup.

But Blatter was full of praise for Nigeria's handling of the Youth championship.

"We did it. I can say that we have had a successful championship," said the FIFA president.

The three week youth tournament, staged for the first time in sub-Saharan Africa, wraps up Saturday with Japan playing Spain in the final, while Mali takes on Uruguay for the third place.

Many critics had worried that Nigeria would not be up to hosting teams from 24 countries and staging 52 matches.

Those fears were unfounded, Blatter said.

He said he was happy there were no incidents.

"The championship will serve a useful lesson for Nigeria in the next step for the Nations Cup in 2000," he said, referring to Nigeria's co-hosting of the African Nations Cup next year.

Top spot beckons for Arsenal

LONDON (AFP) — Champions Arsenal will take over at the top of the English Premiership for the first time this season if they beat Middlesbrough at the Riverside Stadium on Saturday.

Their lead may last less than 24 hours if Manchester United win at fourth-placed Leeds United on Sunday morning, but that may be a tall order for Alex Ferguson's European Cup heroes.

Any thoughts that Arsenal might be suffering from blurred vision after their FA Cup semi-final defeat by United were dispelled by the 5-1 demolition of Wimbledon by Arsene Wenger's side.

Character is an integral part of the Highbury make-up and Middlesbrough, unbeaten in seven but with only pride to play for, are likely to feel the full force of Arsenal's determination to keep one of the trophies they won last season.

Manager Arsene Wenger must decide whether to start with Nigerian Nwankwo Kanu, as he did so successfully against Wimbledon, or out-of-form Frenchman Nicolas Anelka in attack.

Dutchman Dennis Bergkamp should overcome a slight groin strain, while compatriot Marc Overmars is still troubled by blistered feet.

French midfielder Patrick Vieira is happy for the spotlight to be on United, who go into the weekend a point ahead with six games left to Arsenal's five.

"We've just got the Premiership to play for now," he said. "We've started to put the pressure on them and we'll see what happens."

If Arsenal can afford to be one-eyed in pursuing their only remaining route to silverware, United manager Alex Ferguson can afford no such luxury, and he's not complaining.

The treble is very much on after the superb 3-2 win at Juventus at Wednesday which earned them a place in the European Cup final, their first since 1968.

Ferguson's immortality will be confirmed if his side wins the Premiership and FA Cup as well.

The Scot would probably have wished for an easier fixture with which to ease back down to earth than a Lancashire-Yorkshire War of the Roses against Leeds United at Elland Road.

Police concerns surrounding a traditionally volatile fixture mean the game has a morning kick-off but that is unlikely to temper the passions of Leeds fans who would like nothing more than to upset United's triple-edged trophy assault.

Dutch colossus Jaap Stam reckons the Juventus win showed nothing is beyond the current United side, who are unbeaten in 25 games.

"This team has a lot of self-belief and we really showed that when we were 2-0 down after 10 minutes," he said. "I have never played in a team with such self-belief."

Stam, however, picked up an Achilles injury in Turin and is unlikely to feature at Elland Road, opening the way for new England recruit Wes Brown to step in.

Ferguson is hopeful winger Ryan Giggs can shrug off the ankle knock which kept him out of the Juventus match but his only other problem is likely to be a selection headache with strikers Andy Cole, Dwight Yorke, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Teddy Sheringham in such electric form.

Chelsea's title challenge has been rocked by two successive draws, the most recent being Sunday's loss of a two-goal lead to draw 2-2 at home to Leicester.

And Gianluca Vialli's side were knocked out of the European Cup Winners' Cup on Thursday by Spanish outfit Real Mallorca, hence the Sunday afternoon kick-off against Sheffield Wednesday at Hillsborough.

Wednesday aren't out of the relegation woods quite yet but anything other than victory for Chelsea, who are three points behind United having played a game more, will surely extinguish their title hopes once and for all.

At the bottom Nottingham Forest (21 points) will finally be relegated if they don't beat Aston Villa at Villa Park, one of manager Ron Atkinson's former clubs.

Even then, if Blackburn (32) beat visiting Liverpool or Charlton (32) win at relegation rivals Everton (37), they will still go down.

Second-bottom Southampton (31) travel to Derby County.

No 4th Champions' League spot for England

LONDON (AFP) — European body UEFA on Friday officially ruled out English clubs' hopes of a fourth place in next season's Champions' League.

There had been reports that an extra spot would be granted if Manchester United were to win this year's final against Bayern Munich.

But UEFA said that would only happen if Alex Ferguson's team finish outside the Premiership's top three, and that is highly improbable.

A statement from European football's governing body said: "The number of participating clubs from England depends upon Manchester United's final position in the Premier League."

"If Manchester United win the Champions' League final and also finish in first, second or third place in the Premier League, then three

clubs from England would participate in the competition.

"The League champions and runners-up would enter the first group stage directly and the third-placed team would play in the third qualifying round."

"However, if Manchester United win the final, but were to finish below third place in the Premier League, then four English clubs would qualify automatically in next season's Champions' League."

"Manchester United would qualify automatically as Champions' League title-holders, and would be joined by the teams which finish in first, second and third place in the Premier League."

That would require a truly remarkable slump by Alex Ferguson's men in their last six matches as they are currently eight points clear of fourth-placed Leeds and also have a game in

hand.

A meeting later on Friday will clarify how many tickets will be made available to United supporters for the final at the massive Nou Camp stadium in Barcelona.

United fans were outraged by initial reports that they were only likely to receive 25,000 seats for their team's first European Cup final in 31 years.

But the UEFA spokesman said, no decision has been made and explained: "There is a meeting in Barcelona today, and we won't know until the end of the afternoon."

Ahlsstrom had previously said: "The priority will be to benefit the two teams that have qualified for a match in a stadium which will have a capacity of 98,000 for this game."

But, while that offers hope to United supporters, there is less joy

from UEFA on the chances of overturning suspensions that will see Roy Keane and Paul Scholes miss the May 26 final.

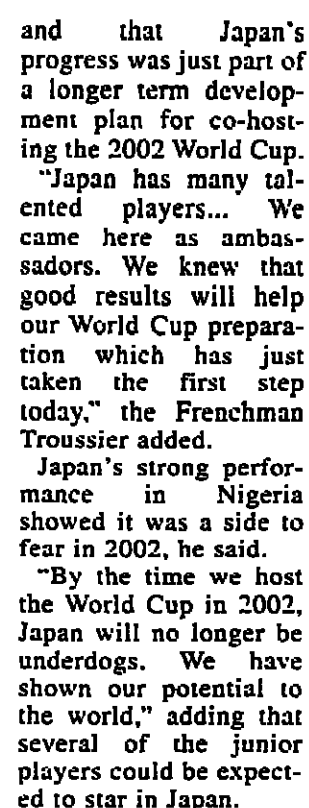
Both players will be banned from the clash after picking up a second booking in the semi-final second-leg win over Juventus, and the media office spokesman said there was "no chance" of any change to that ruling.

This was backed up by UEFA president Lennart Johansson, who said: "Although the English public might want them to play it would not be fair on the German team, and the bookings must stand."

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Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.

Three-time Olympian Seizinger retires



was able to live a normal life until 15 like everyone else." Seizinger said she never believed that she could become a champion.

"That's why I never really had an idol, though I did admire Switzerland's Maria Walliser."

The German speed specialist has appeared on Olympic podiums four times, earning a bronze medal in the super-G at Albertville in 1992 as well as her 1994 and 1998 victories.

Despite her quiet superstar status, Seizinger preferred the team experience to the

option — like Alberto Tomba and Deborah Compagnoni — of training exclusively with a personal coach, physiotherapy and psychological fitness staff.

"It would be difficult in the speed races to assign a private training piste to just one person," she says. "It's better

The German will now devote herself to studying economics.

HOUSTON (AFP) — Seven-time All-Star forward Scottie Pippen of the Houston Rockets was arrested early Thursday morning and charged with driving while intoxicated. According to a Houston police spokesman, Pippen failed a field sobriety test and refused to take a breathalyzer after he was pulled over for running a red light at about 1:30 a.m., hours after the Rockets were beaten at home by the Dallas Mavericks. "He passed a few cars and ran a red light into the oncoming lane when police pulled him over," said police spokesperson John Leggio. "The officers noted the alcohol odor on his breath and he showed signs of intoxication. He failed a field sobriety test and refused to take a breath test." Pippen was booked and later released on bail.

TURIN (AFP) — French World Cup hero Zinedine Zidane will be staying at Juventus for at least another season, the club's director general Luciano Moggi said Thursday, scotching rumours of the midfielder's departure. Zidane had expressed doubts about his future at the club before their European Cup defeat to Manchester United, while the Turin press called for him to sell off after his disappointing performance against Alex Ferguson's side. But Moggi insisted: "Zidane is staying with Juventus. 'I have spoken to him again today and he is very happy to stay with us and have great season with us next season.'" Zidane, who only signed a new contract last year, had been linked earlier in the week with a move to Spain, reportedly to please his wife, who is of Spanish origin.

TERNI, Italy (AFP) — West Hamme footballer Paolo Di Canio was fined \$1,400 here on Friday following a row with a traffic policeman. The case dated back to June 10, 1997 when Di Canio was visiting Terni, his wife's home town, and tried to drive into an area restricted to permit-holders. A row erupted when he was stopped by a traffic policeman, who later filed verbal abuse charges. The volatile striker has also been in trouble in the Premiership this season; getting banned for 11 games after pushing over referee Paul Alcock while playing for Sheffield Wednesday against Arsenal in September.

ORLANDO (R) — The Miami Heat overcame the worst first half in franchise history to take over first place in the Eastern Conference with a 75-70 victory over the Orlando Magic on Thursday.

The Heat used a huge 33-13 third quarter to recover from their horrendous start in the crucial matchup of the top two teams in the East.

Alonzo Mourning scored 18 points and pulled down 17 rebounds and Jamal Mashburn added 13 and 12 for the heat, who were held to an embarrassing franchise-low eight points in the first quarter and 23 by intermission.

"We were looking like the bad news bears out there," said Heat forward P.J. Brown.

Miami extended the lead to 68-55 in the fourth quarter and withstood an Orlando rally that reduced the margin to 73-70 with less than a minute to play. Orlando had a chance to tie in the closing seconds but Darrell Armstrong's 3-

In Atlanta, Steve Smith scored 13 of his 26 points in the decisive third quarter

as the Hawks maintained their hold on fourth place in the East with a 106-94 victory over the Boston Celtics.

Smith helped Atlanta outscore the Celtics 30-13 in the third quarter as the Hawks maintained a two-game lead over Philadelphia in the battle for homecourt advantage in the first round of the playoffs.

The Hawks improved to 3-0 since their leading scorer, Smith, returned from a sprained knee.

In San Antonio, David Robinson scored 18 points and Tim Duncan added 14 points and 10 rebounds as spurs extended their winning streak to five games with a 103-76 pounding of the Dallas Mavericks.

Malik Rose also chipped in 14 points for the Spurs, who pulled within two games of the league-leading Utah Jazz.

Michael Finley scored 20 points for Dallas, which failed in its bid to win three games in as many nights.

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Yeltsin letter urges Arafat to postpone announcement of state

Agencies

RUSSIAN FOREIGN Minister Igor Ivanov on Friday delivered a letter from Boris Yeltsin to Yasser Arafat urging the Palestinian president to put off proclaiming a state on May 4.

"This letter contains a request to the Palestinian leadership to delay any announcement of a state for a specified and limited period," Ivanov told journalists after meeting Arafat at his office in Ramallah in the West Bank.

"If there is a delay the resulting additional period should be used to intensify final status talks and fully implement the interim agreements," Ivanov said.

May 4 marks the end of the five-year interim period of the Oslo peace process whereupon Arafat has repeatedly threatened to declare a Palestinian state unilaterally.

In an attempt to garner support for the Palestinian position Arafat has recently undertaken a mammoth tour of world capitals.

But most of the countries which he has visited, including the member states of the European Union, the United States and now Russia, have urged Arafat to delay proclaiming a state at least until after Israeli elections due May 17.

On Thursday, Ivanov and his Israeli counterpart Ariel Sharon clashed in public over the issue of an Israeli withdrawal from

the occupied Golan Heights.

"We believe that Israel and Syria must resume peace talks from the point at which the peace talks ended," Ivanov told a joint press conference.

Negotiations broke off in February 1996 and Syria has demanded Israel concede the strategic Golan plateau, which it captured in 1967 and illegally annexed in 1981, before talks can resume.

Then-Labour Prime Minister Shimon Peres agreed in principle to pull back from the Golan in exchange for a peace treaty and security guarantees from Damascus.

But Sharon said Israel's position was that the two sides must meet without any pre-conditions.

"We want to sit around a table, have each side present its position and reach peace with security for Israel," he said.

He added that his personal view is that Israel should not withdraw from an inch of the Golan, but that is not necessarily the government view.

"My personal opinion is well-known, I am against any kind of withdrawal from the Golan, but I presented the government view to Ivanov, not my own personal view," Sharon said.

Sharon took Ivanov on a helicopter tour of the Golan and West Bank on Thursday to show him Israel's "strategic needs."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Sharon consid-

er significant parts of the Golan Heights to be of strategic importance to Israel. They also consider about half the West Bank to be essential "security zones" which cannot be turned over to Palestinian control.

Meanwhile, a senior Palestinian official lashed out on Friday at the helicopter tour of the West Bank taken by Ivanov and Sharon.

"I find it strange that Ivanov should have taken the trip over the occupied West Bank accompanied by Sharon. It's an unprecedented step for any international official to take," said Palestinian cabinet secretary Ahmad Abdul Rahman.

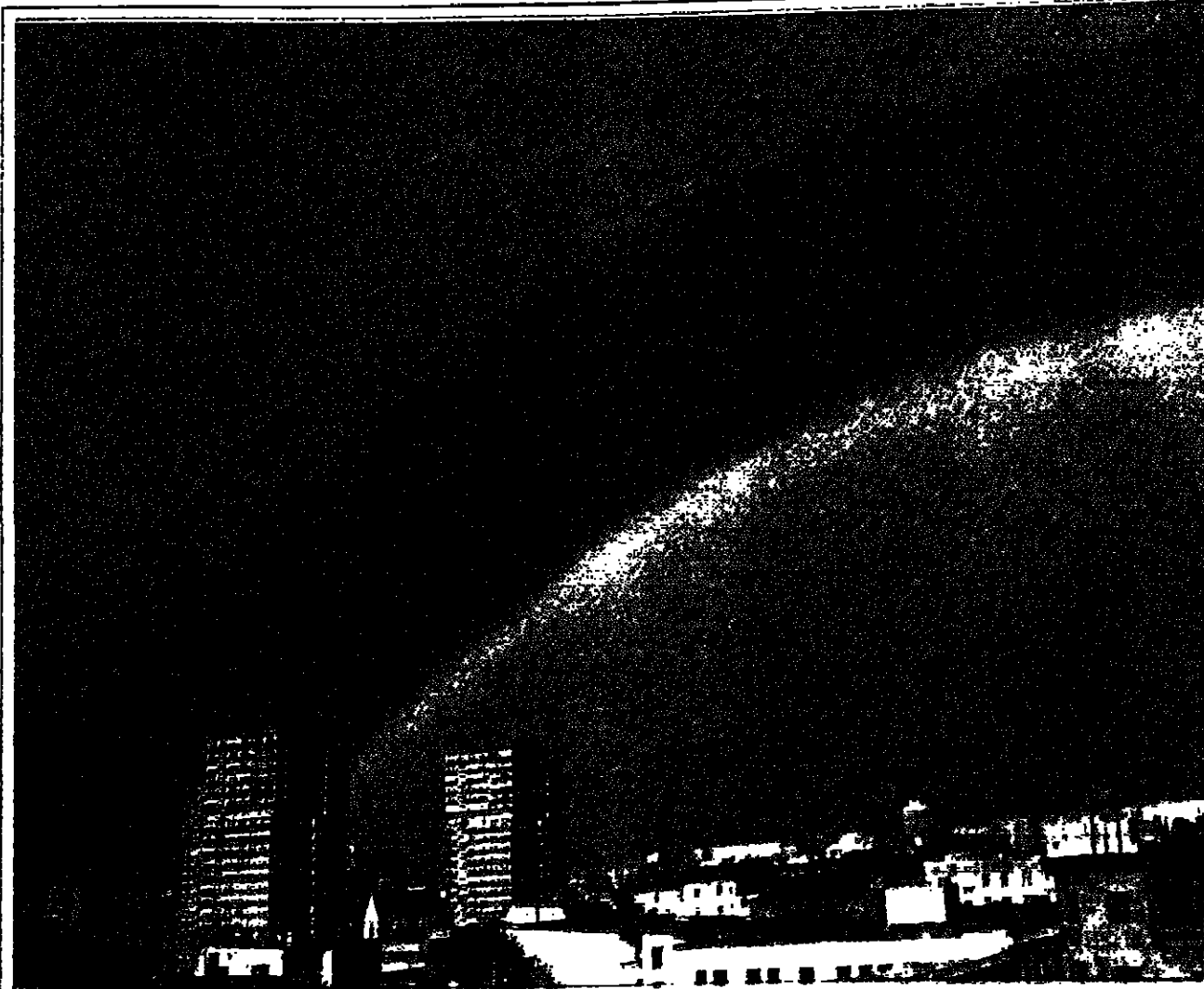
"It had been assumed that Ivanov would tour the West Bank accompanied by Palestinian officials because it is occupied Palestinian land," he told AFP.

"He could then have been briefed on the dangers to the peace process posed by Israeli settlement activity and not on what Sharon calls Israel's security requirements," Abdul Rahman said.

But Ivanov stressed that the trip implied no dilution in Russian support for the Palestinians.

"I stress again the Russian position on Palestine stands, which is that we support the right of the Palestinians to an independent state," he said.

"Our position on [Jewish] settlements is also unchanged and that is that they should be stopped," Ivanov said.



NOT IN JORDAN: A double rainbow can be seen over the city of Halle, eastern Germany, after a thunderstorm on Friday (AP photo)

U.N. rights body condemns Israel on territories, Iraq for 'widespread terror'

GENEVA (Agencies) — The United Nations' main human rights body on Friday condemned Israeli activities in the occupied Arab territories, citing "continued violations" such as torture of Palestinians.

The U.N. Commission on Human Rights, holding its annual six-week session, adopted a resolution which slammed Israel for detaining thousands of Palestinians without trial and the "expropriation of Palestinian homes" in east Jerusalem.

The text — presented by 21 states including many Islamic countries such as Egypt, Pakistan and Sudan — was adopted with 31 votes in favour, 21 abstentions and only the United States voting against.

Condemnation of Israel has become something of an annual ritual at the 53-member forum in Geneva, with only Washington siding with the Jewish state, its traditional ally.

The resolution also accused Israel's government of contempt for the principles of the Middle East peace process.

It said all Israeli settlements in territories occupied since 1967 were illegal and "constituted a flagrant violation" of international law.

Israel's delegate took the floor to denounce the continued "discrimination" of being "singled out" as a separate agenda item at the commission and other multilateral fora.

"Being the only country to have a full agenda item devoted to us is one of the manifestations of this shameful phenomenon," he said.

U.S. Ambassador Nancy Rubin criticised the resolutions

as "one-sided attacks against the state of Israel."

The commission also adopted two other texts critical of Israel's human rights record, one focusing on the Golan Heights and a milder, more general text presented by 33 states including several European Union countries.

The European-sponsored motion expressed "grave concern" at an increase in Israeli settlement activities and urged Israel to match its stated commitment to the peace process with actions.

Also Friday, the Iraqi regime was charged by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights with sowing "widespread terror" among the population.

A resolution against Iraq presented to the 53-member commission by the European

Union mustered 35 votes, with none against and 18 abstentions.

The text accused Iraq of "systematic, widespread and extremely grave" human rights violations, resulting in "all-pervasive" repression and oppression sustained by "broad-based discrimination and widespread terror."

In Iraq, the abuses included summary and arbitrary executions, including political killings, disappearances and the so-called "clean-out of prisons."

The Iraqi delegate said the resolution was shameful, unbalanced and far from the truth.

The delegate accused the United States and Britain of "genocide against the Iraqi people" by continuing their embargo against the country.

Mubarak briefs Israeli president on talks with Arafat

CAIRO (R) — Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak met Israeli President Ezer Weizman on Thursday, less than two weeks ahead of what Palestinians see as a deadline for the birth of an independent state.

Mubarak said he had briefed his counterpart on his discussion of the issue on Wednesday with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, who insists he has the right to proclaim a state on May 4, when an interim peace period with Israel expires.

He did not say whether Arafat intended to go ahead with a move in the teeth of a threat by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to hit back by annexing parts of the West Bank.

"I think the Palestinians will take the right decision not to create much more problems in the atmosphere now," Mubarak told a joint news conference after three hours of talks.

"The Palestinian [National] Council will meet on April 27. I hope they will not take a decision that will affect the peace process," he said, referring to the Palestinian parliament.

Arafat faces Arab and international pressure to defer any proclamation at least until after the Israeli May 17 election.

Egypt has pledged to support whatever the Palestinians decide.

Weizman declined to give his own views on whether the Palestinians should have their own state. "Everything is to be negotiated. I must be very diplomatic with you," he said.

The Israeli president said that regardless of the outcome of his country's election, the peace process should go on.

"Unfortunately it is not in a very healthy situation now," he said. "I believe whatever the results of the election... we will have a good alternative to pursue and carry on the peace process and to settle the affairs with Palestinians," he said.

"And inshallah [God willing] we will also go to Syria and find a way with them and try and build together," he added.

Asked if Egypt was ready to free Azzam Azzam, an Arab Israeli sentenced by an Egyptian court in 1997 to 15 years in jail for spying for Israel, Mubarak reiterated his earlier position, saying: "I do not have the authority to pardon an individual."

'U.N. arms monitors destroyed Iraq animal vaccine factory'

DAURA (AP) — Iraq on Thursday accused U.N. disarmament experts of disabling its main livestock vaccine plant by destroying 28 major pieces of equipment during a search related to biological weapons.

The charge by plant director Muntasir Al Ani disputes claims by chief U.N. weapons inspector Richard Butler that the factory is still capable of producing the vaccines.

The government took foreign media representatives on a guided tour Thursday of the plant in Daura, 20 kilometres south of Baghdad.

Entangled pieces of destroyed equipment and small heaps of scrap dotted the sprawling facility.

Ventilation pipes and sluices were chopped off at several places. One autoclave, in the shape of a circular container for sterilising and heating, was left intact while another in an adjacent room was cut to pieces.

The U.N. inspectors had raided the plant in 1996 to dismantle equipment that Iraq acknowledged was installed in the plant to

make weapons for germ warfare.

But the inspectors "did not only destroy those parts but have disabled the whole factory," Sinan Abdul Hassan of Iraq's National Monitoring Directorate told the Associated Press.

The directorate coordinated U.N. disarmament activities in the country.

Al Ani, the plant director, said the inspectors spared some 40 pieces of equipment but also foamed, cemented and chopped off the factory's air-handling system without which it will be impossible to start production. He did not give details of the other 28 equipment that were dismantled.

In New York, Ewen Buchanan, spokesman for the U.N. Special Commission which Butler heads, said Thursday: "The reason why we destroyed it was because the Iraqis admitted themselves that they had indeed turned the place into a biological weapons factory producing the deadly agent botulinum toxin. We did not destroy it because it was a vaccine facility."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkey urged to admit Armenian genocide

WASHINGTON (AFP) — More than 150 intellectuals, the majority of them Turkish-Americans, called on the Turkish government Friday to admit that a genocidal campaign against ethnic Armenians was perpetrated under Turkish rule in 1915. "After 84 years the Turkish government continues to deny the genocide of the Armenians by blaming the victims and undermining historical fact with false rhetoric," according to the signatories of an open letter published on a full-page of Friday's Washington Post. Saturday, April 24, will be the anniversary of the beginning of the genocide the letter said. An official campaign to exterminate Turkey's Armenian population was conducted between 1894 and 1915, and sporadically thereafter. Among the signatories to the letter were numerous university professors, sociologists, historians, theologians and famous writers including Norman Mailer, Wole Soyinka, William Styron, John Updike and Kurt Vonnegut. "The Armenian Genocide was the most dramatic human rights issue of the time and was reported regularly in newspapers across the U.S.," the signatories wrote. "Denial of genocide serves to reshape history in order to demonise the victims and rehabilitate the perpetrators. Denial of genocide is the final stage of genocide," they continued.

Palestinians stone Israeli soldiers

RAFAH (AFP) — Some 100 Palestinian youths stoned Israeli soldiers in Gaza Strip on Friday in protest at the seizure of a disputed site by Jewish settlers, witnesses said. The soldiers sheltered in half a dozen military vehicles at the site near the Jewish settlement of Morag in the southern Gaza Strip and did not respond to the stoning, the witnesses said. Earlier, around 300 worshippers attended Friday prayers and heard a speech from local deputy Suleiman Al Rumi in which he called for Palestinians from the Rafah area to continue to resist settlement activity, saying that any price was worth paying to defend the land. Worshippers chanted slogans denouncing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu before the youths broke away and starting stoning the nearby Israeli soldiers, the witnesses said.

Israeli shell wounds three Lebanese

NABATIYEH (AP) — An Israeli shell landed in a south Lebanon village Friday, wounding three civilians, Lebanese security officials said. Salim Younes, 70, and his 35-year-old son, Mohammad, received shrapnel wounds when the 155-mm shell exploded as they were fixing the family tractor outside their home in the village of Kfar Tibnit. Khairiyeh Nahleh, 33, was also wounded, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity. The shell crashed some 60 metres from a Lebanese army checkpoint in Kfar Tibnit, which is just outside an Israeli-occupied border enclave in southern Lebanon. The village lies four kilometres southwest of the market town of Nabatiyeh.

Russian missiles arrive on Crete

AITHENS (R) — Russian anti-aircraft missiles have arrived on the Greek island of Crete after Turkey strongly objected to plans to install them in Cyprus, the Greek government said on Thursday. The S-300 surface-to-air missiles were ordered from Russia by the Cypriot government in a bid to counter Turkish air superiority over the divided island. Turkey reacted angrily to news of the order, threatening to use force to prevent the missiles arriving on Cyprus. Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides reached an agreement with the Greek government earlier this year to install the missiles in Crete. Clerides had come under pressure from Washington and the European Union to cancel the order, for fear that it might heighten tension between Greece and Turkey.

'One Iraqi killed in U.S. strikes'

BAGHDAD (AFP) — One Iraqi was killed and four others wounded Thursday in U.S. air strikes on military targets in the northern no-fly zone, an Iraqi military spokesman said. "A citizen was killed and four others were wounded in U.S. bombardments of military sites in the north of the country," said the spokesman, quoted by the official INA news agency. He added that "U.S. and British airplanes coming from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait violated Iraqi air space in the south of the country," without giving word on casualties or damage there.

Ecevit ahead of nationalists in final vote tally

ANKARA (AFP) — Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit's Democratic Left Party (DSP) won 22.1 per cent of the vote in Turkey's general election, according to results given by the Anatolia news agency on Friday with all votes counted.

Ecevit's DSP is now set to become the biggest voting bloc in the 550-seat parliament with 136 seats, compared to 76 seats it held in the outgoing parliament.

Second was the extreme-right Nationalist Action Party (MHP), which garnered a surprising 18.0 per cent. The party, which has been absent from parliament for the past 22 years, will now command 130 seats, according to the unofficial results.

The pro-religious Virtue Party (FP) came in third place with 15.3 per cent despite pre-election polls that the Islamists be second-placed in Sunday's polls.

The FP will now have 110 members of parliament, as opposed to 144 deputies in the outgoing assembly which had given them the upper hand.

The two rival conservative parties led by Mesut Yilmaz and Tansu Ciller, both ex-premiers, come in last, according to the unofficial results.

With 13.2 per cent, Yilmaz's Motherland Party (ANAP) has the edge over Ciller's True Path Party (DYP), which has 12.0 per cent. The percentages correspond to 86 seats for Yilmaz and 85 for Ciller.

Turkey hails British bar on Kurdish satellite station

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey on Friday hailed a decision by British regulators to revoke the licence of Kurdish satellite television Med-TV for violating rules on incitement.

"This shows that the Turkish republic can achieve all its targets if it pursues its just cases with determination," Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit said in Ankara.

Britain's Independent Television Commission (ITC) said Friday that Med-TV's licence was "revoked" following broadcasts that were "likely to

encourage or incite crime or lead to disorder."

"Whatever sympathy there may be in the United Kingdom for the Kurdish people, it is not in the public interest to have any broadcaster use the U.K. as a platform for broadcasts which incite people to violence," ITC chairman, Sir Robin Biggam, said in a statement.

The revocation will take effect in 28 days, the ITC added.

"There are some circles that have been trying for years to spread terrorism and violence in Turkey, but the

Turkish nation will determined to prevent terrorism," Ecevit added.

The ITC's decision comes after a 21-day suspension of the station's licence for breaching rules of incitement to commit crime or violence in broadcasts following the capture of Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan in February, which triggered mass demonstrations by Kurds across European cities.

At the time, Ankara had told London that Med-TV was responsible for provoking a string of bloody bombing attacks in Turkey since Ocalan's cap-

ture in Turkey which claimed the lives of some 20 people and wounded scores of others.

Turkey claims the London-based Med-TV is the mouthpiece of Ocalan's Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which has been fighting for an independent homeland since 1984 in the southeastern Anatolia.

Ocalan, jailed on a heavily-guarded prison island, is currently awaiting a treason trial for which the Turkish penal code stipulates capital punishment.

Sex on the menu in former Saigon

HANOI (R) — Sex-related services are on the menu at over 75 per cent of restaurants in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City, an official daily reported on Friday. Saigon City Phung said that of the 400 officially registered restaurants in the city formerly called Saigon, 301 were a from for "sex" (sexual) hotels. But can include everything from hand-holding to sexual intercourse. "The trade services office has withdrawn 96 (restaurant) licences and refused to grant permission to 17 other restaurants," which showed indications of being involved in unhealthy business," the paper said.

Party offers TM to NATO troops

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Marshal's Natural Law Party has offered to give the 10,000 NATO troops in the Balkans training in transcendental meditation. Natural Law Party leaders from eight European Union states sent an open letter to NATO and the EU explaining that meditation and yogic flying — a type of controlled levitation — would "create an atmosphere in which a stable solution will naturally emerge" for the Balkans conflict. Daily training in the techniques would enable troops to reestablish harmony in the region "not by talking or bombing but by radiating peace," the party said. The party appealed for practitioners of yogic flying to converge urgently at the Croatian resort of Dubrovnik to generate an atmosphere of peace throughout the region.

Robotic bird hunters eliminate danger to planes

QUEBEC CITY (R) — Collisions between birds and aircraft, a serious safety problem worldwide, have been virtually eliminated at Quebec City's airport through the use of robotic "hunters" and falcons. Silhouettes of "hunters" on tripods near the runways spin around, emitting loud, gunshot-like bangs every four minutes, while other person-powered devices imitate the movement of falcons taking off to attack prey. "This is a world first. It's very effective," Jacques Piquet, president of environmental services company Agri-Six, told Reuters. The number of collisions at the airport was cut to one from 21 in 1998, leaving airport officials to believe they are saving lives.

World's oldest football on sale

EDINBURGH (R) — The world's oldest football, a 400-year-old sphere with a royal pedigree, will go on display for the first time in centuries. Scottish museum officials said. Made of a pig's bladder and wrapped in leather, the small ball probably belonged to Mary Queen of Scots and dates from 1560 or 1570, said Michael Megginnes, director of collections at the Smith Art Gallery and Museum in Stirling. The ball, about a third the size of those used in today's game, was found hidden behind panelling in the Stirling castle bedchamber of Mary, the Catholic pretender to queen Elizabeth's throne in England who was later beheaded by the Protestant monarch.

Public reading of Don Quixote

MADRID (R) — A film-maker and a judge joined mimers and writers in Madrid to read about a 17th century Spaniard who thought windmills were giants. Peruvian author Mario Vargas Llosa started a three-day public reading of Miguel De Cervantes's 17th century masterpiece "Don Quixote" in Madrid's Circolo De Bellas Artes. "Down in a village of La Mancha, the name of which I have no desire to recollect," declared Vargas Llosa at the start of the reading. Spain's most famous literary work tells the story of an old gentleman who thinks he is a knight after reading too many chivalric tales, and sets out on a series of adventures.